



Figgy Cornmeal Cookies

Makes about 45 one-inch cookies

For the dough:

- 1 ½ cups/192g all-purpose flour
- 1/3 cup/52g fine cornmeal
- 1/4 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 ½ sticks / 3/4 cup / 170g unsalted butter
- 1/2 cup/101g granulated sugar
- Zest of 1 orange
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 large egg

For the filling:

- 1 (8- or 9-ounce) package of dried figs, stemmed and halved (about 1 ½ cups)
- 3 tablespoons honey
- 1/2 cup dry red wine (optional) or water
- Juice of 1 orange (plus enough water to total 1/2 cup)
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon finely ground black pepper

To Finish:

- 1 egg yolk

- 2 tablespoons heavy cream or milk
 - Sanding sugar (AKA sparkling sugar or Sugar in the Raw), for sprinkling
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1. Make the dough: In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, cornmeal, baking powder, and salt. Set aside.
2. In the bowl of an electric stand mixer using the paddle attachment (see TIPS below for another mixing method), cream the butter, sugar, and orange zest until light and fluffy, 2 to 3 minutes. Add half of the dry ingredients to the stand mixer bowl and mix until incorporated. Add the vanilla and egg, and beat again until well combined. Add the rest of the dry ingredients, beating until well combined and scraping down the sides of the bowl once or twice as needed.
3. Wrap the dough up in a roughly rectangular package and chill until firm enough to roll out, for at least 1 hour and as much as 2 or 3 days ahead of time.
4. Meanwhile, make the filling: Combine the figs, honey, red wine (or water), orange juice (from the orange you zested), cinnamon, and pepper in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil then reduce to a steady simmer over medium-low heat and cook about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally until the liquid looks syrupy. If it doesn't look syrupy after 10 minutes, turn up the heat and cook 1 to 2 minutes more until it does. Let cool slightly, transfer to the bowl of a food processor, and pulse until fairly smooth (it's OK if there's a little texture). Scrape into a bowl, and let cool completely, stirring from time to time to release the heat. If making ahead, refrigerate until about an hour before ready to use.
5. Preheat oven to 375°F. Remove dough from refrigerator to soften slightly. Lightly flour a 10 by 15-inch piece of parchment paper. Divide the dough in half so you have two rectangles. Flour both sides of the dough, and roll out to about 8 by 11 inches, aiming to retain the rectangular shape as much as possible (see TIPS below). The dough should be a little less than 1/4-inch thick. Slide the paper with the dough on it onto a sheet pan and chill while you roll the other half of the dough, using the same procedure.
6. Spread the fig filling on the first piece of dough, aiming to spread it to an even thickness, leaving a 1-inch border all around. If the dough is too soft, it could tear, so make sure it's pretty firm, and, if not, return to the freezer or fridge to firm up.
7. When pretty firm, line up the edges of the two pieces of dough like an open book, and flop the second piece of dough on top. Peel off the parchment paper. Use a pastry or pizza cutter to make score marks on the top of the dough. You can score (and later cut) the dough any way you want, either free-form or orderly. If you want to cut the cookies into diamond shapes, as shown just below, use a ruler to make the score marks. Since the ruler is 1-inch wide, just use the edge as a guide, and continue to move it over to make the next line.
8. Use a small fork to perforate each piece. Chill if the dough has softened, until firm.
9. Use a fork to mix the egg yolk and cream (using more cream if needed to achieve a brush-able thickness). Brush it all over the top of the dough, and sprinkle generously with the sugar (you should use 1 to 2 tablespoons).

10. Immediately place on the center rack of the oven, and bake 35 to 40 minutes, turning the pan around halfway through the baking time, until the top is golden brown all the way to the center. The edges will be getting dark, but that's OK.
11. Place on a rack to cool. After about 10 minutes, use a knife or whatever tool you used to make the score marks to cut along the marks. The cookies will keep well for up to a week stored in an airtight container at room temperature, and can also be refrigerated or frozen to last longer.

TIPS:

- If you don't have a stand mixer, you can mix the dough by hand. Use a heavy bowl so you have more leverage, and make sure the butter is softened so it can be easily worked.
- I find it easiest to make both the dough and the filling the day before I want to bake, since the dough needs to chill and the filling needs to cool.
- Look for brown "Calimyrna" or "Golden California" dried figs. You'll usually find these in the produce section of your supermarket in tightly packed rectangular or circular packages. These tend to be moister than the loose ones you'll find in bulk or bulk packages, which could require more liquid. Mission figs are fine too, but the filling will be darker.
- Before rolling the dough, use your hands to soften it slightly, especially around the edges. Give it a little massage!
- When rolling a large piece of dough, pay careful attention to rolling from the center out to the edges. If the edges crack, the dough is too cold, but just push them back together. To control the shape of the dough, *push* the dough where you want it to go using the rolling pin. You're in control! Show that dough who's boss!
- In the beginning stages of the rolling process, flip the dough and flour both sides once or twice. This prevent keep the dough from sticking to the paper and keep it moving freely.
- You can feel the thickness of the dough by sliding one hand under the paper, with the other hand on top.