



## Dried Fruit and Nut Bar Cookies

### *Pizza Ebraica*

Makes about 10 large bar cookies (or 2 dozen smaller cookies)

*This recipe is reprinted, with permission, from [Portico: Cooking and Feasting in Rome's Jewish Kitchen](#), by Leah Koenig (W.W. Norton, 2023)*

The Roman Jewish Ghetto's most famous "pizza" has nothing to do with sauce or cheese. Instead, pizza Ebraica are crispy-edged, soft-centered, absolutely addictive bar cookies. Their exact origins are unclear, but they were likely brought to Rome by Sephardi Jews fleeing the Spanish Inquisition. The cookies (the name roughly translates as "Jewish-style pie") are also sometimes called pizza dolce ("sweet pie") or pizza de beridde ("bris pie") — the latter

because they are traditionally served at circumcisions.

Locals and tourists alike form long lines outside Pasticceria il Boccione to buy the 200-year old kosher pastry shop's beloved pizza Ebraica. Most famously, in 2008, Pope Benedict XVI declared Boccione's take on the cookies to be his favorite dessert in all of Rome.

The bakery's pizza Ebraica are at least an inch thick, and emerge from the oven with the charred patina that has become Boccione's trademark. They are perfect, full stop, but a challenge to re-create at home. I have the best luck when I pat the dough a bit thinner, and take the cookies out of the oven when they are well browned rather than fully singed. I do follow Boccione's impressive ratio of dough to nuts and dried fruit, however, making sure every bite is brimming with crunchy almonds, buttery pine nuts, and sweet-tart raisins and cherries.

- 2/3 cup (160 ml) vegetable oil (such as sunflower)
- 1/3 cup (80 ml) dry white wine
- 1 ½ cups (210 g) all-purpose flour, plus more for shaping
- 1 cup (100 g) almond flour
- 1 cup (200 g) granulated sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 cup (70 g) unsalted roasted almonds, left whole or very roughly chopped
- 1/4 cup (30 g) pine nuts
- 1/2 cup (70 g) dark raisins, soaked in warm water for 5 minutes and drained well
- 1/2 cup (75 g) candied cherries, roughly chopped, or dried cherries, soaked in water for 5 minutes, drained, and roughly chopped

- 1/3 cup (40 g) candied citron or candied orange peel, roughly chopped
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1. Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C). Line two large baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. Whisk together the vegetable oil and wine in a large bowl, until combined.
3. Whisk together the all-purpose flour, almond flour, sugar, and salt in a medium bowl. Add the dry ingredients to the oil mixture in a few stages, stirring until a soft dough forms. Add the almonds, pine nuts, raisins, cherries, and candied citron and, using clean hands, knead them into the dough. It will look like too many mix-ins for the amount of dough, but keep kneading until mostly incorporated. It's okay if a few of the mix-ins are still falling out of the dough.
4. Turn the dough out, divide into 2 equal portions, and place one portion in the center of each prepared baking sheet. Lightly flour your hands, then pat and press the dough into rectangles about 8 x 4 inches (20 x 10 cm) and 3/4 inch (1.9 cm) thick. Using a floured bench scraper or knife, slice each rectangle crosswise into 5 brick-shaped pieces. (It can be tricky to cut through whole almonds, just do your best and pat the pieces back together as necessary.) Gently nudge the pieces away from one another on the baking sheet, leaving about 1/2 inch (1.25 cm) space between the cookies.
5. Bake, rotating the pans back to front and bottom to top halfway through baking, for 20 to 25 minutes, until the cookies are a few shades darker on top and quite browned (almost burnt) around the edges. The cookies will still feel soft on top, but they will firm up as they cool.
6. Remove the baking sheets from the oven and set on wire racks to cool for about 10 minutes, then transfer the cookies to the racks to cool completely.
7. Serve the bars as is or break into smaller pieces, if desired. The cookies can be stored, in an airtight container, in the fridge for up to 1 week, or in the freezer for up to 3 months.