

Fruit Nut Crackers & Radish Butter

In celebration of the release of my new book, *The Side Gardener*, I thought I'd share with you one of my favourite recipes from the book: fruit and nut crackers smothered in radish butter! A cracker so good, I treat it more like cookie. I like to double the recipe and freeze half of the finished loaf. This way should the need for delicious crackers arise I always have some on hand. I simply pull out the loaf, slice and bake!

While I think this particular combination of fruit and nuts is damn near perfection (and even more so when spread thickly with radish butter), please don't hesitate to switch it up should any of it not suit your taste or pantry stock. If possible, I'd suggest making the loaf a day in advance to ensure the easiest, cleanest slicing. If the loaf is even slightly warm when slicing it can prove a little challenging.

1 cup/120 g all purpose flour

Makes: about 36 crackers

1/4 cup/50 g firmly dark brown sugar

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Butter an 8-inch loaf pan and line with parchment paper.

1 tsp baking powder

In a large bowl, combine the flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt with the raisins, dried cherries, hazelnuts, pistachios, apricots, figs, and rosemary. Stir to combine. Add the buttermilk and stir to combine. The dough is on the drier side, so I find it best to use my hands for the final mixing to ensure it all comes together nicely.

1/2 tsp salt

1/4 cup/40 g raisins

Press the dough evenly into the prepared loaf pan. Bake for approximately 30 minutes or until a wooden skewer inserted into the center of the loaf comes out clean.

1/4 cup/40 g dried cherries

1/4 cup/35 g roughly chopped hazelnuts

Remove the loaf from the oven and set it aside until just cool enough to be removed from the pan. Allow the loaf to cool completely on the wire rack before cutting.

1/4 cup/35 g roughly chopped pistachios

1/4 cup/37.5 g roughly chopped dried apricots

Using a serrated knife, carefully slice each cracker very thinly and lay them on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Use a pastry brush to lightly coat the face-up side of each cracker with the melted butter.

1/4 cup/47.5 g roughly chopped dried figs

1 tbsp finely chopped fresh rosemary

Bake for 15 to 20 minutes, until a lovely golden brown.

1/2 cup/125 ml buttermilk

You can store the cooled crackers in an airtight container for at least one week or in the freezer for 3 months.

2 tbsp melted butter

Makes: about 2 cups/454 g butter

Radish Butter

Heap the grated radish in the middle of a double layer of cheesecloth. Twist the top closed and give the bundle a good squeeze to remove any excess liquid. Repeat this several times until the radish is very dry.

2 cups/230 g fresh radishes, washed, dried, and finely grated

1 cup "European style" unsalted butter*

In a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, whip the butter and lemon juice until light and fluffy. Add the grated radish and salt and mix to combine.

1 tbsp lemon juice

Place the radish butter in a large ramekin or small serving dish, making a lovely little mountain. Sprinkle with a little more sea salt and serve alongside the fruity nut crackers. This butter will keep, covered, in the refrigerator for several days but do allow it to warm slightly before serving to make it easier for spreading.

1 1/2 tsp sea salt, plus more for sprinkling