

Day 12: Melt in Your Mouth Shortbread

This little cookie ticks all the necessary boxes for baking on Christmas Eve: fast, uncomplicated and delicious. Using two spoons and the drop method makes the whole effort really simple but it also ensures a lighter, more “melty” cookie. I’ve tried using a cookie press and a piping bag, as well as hand rolling little balls and pressing them down with a patterned stamp. All variations were yummy but for overall texture the first and easiest method was the best.

Makes: 4 dozen

1 cup butter, room temperature

1 1/5 cups all purpose flour

2/3 cup icing sugar

1/4 cup cornstarch

2 tsp vanilla bean paste

1/2 tsp salt

12 candied cherries, quartered (optional)

You will need: 2 cookie sheets lined with parchment

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

In a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment or a large mixing bowl with hand held mixer, beat the butter and sugar on low until combined and then switch to high speed. Continue to beat until light, fluffy and very pale in colour. Scrape down the sides of the bowl.

Add the flour, cornstarch and salt and beat on low until combined. Scrape down the sides of the bowl. Add the vanilla paste and beat on high until well combined.

Using two small spoons, drop 24 little piles of dough, about 1 tablespoon each, on to the prepared cookie sheet. Top each cookie with a piece of candied cherry. Repeat with the remaining dough and second cookie sheet.

Bake for 10-12 minutes, until the cookies are just starting to turn a light golden brown around the edges.

Remove the cookies from the oven and allow them to cool slightly before transferring them to cooling racks.

These cookies will keep in an airtight container for several weeks but in all honesty, they’ll be long gone before that.