Hungarian Poppy Seed Cookies

Make-ahead · Serves a crowd · Makes about 36

Ken's note: TBD

Buttery lemon-clove pinwheels around a spiral of sweet poppy seed filling. Poppy seed, lemon, and clove are the classic Eastern European combination. The filling is made from scratch here, and the dough is rolled between sheets of wax paper, chilled, spread, rolled up, and sliced.

Ingredients

Poppy seed filling

- 1 cup poppy seeds (about 5 oz), ground fine in a spice grinder
- ½ cup milk
- ¼ cup sugar
- 1 Tbsp honey
- 1 Tbsp butter
- 1 tsp grated lemon zest
- Pinch of salt

Dough

- ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- 1 tsp grated lemon zest
- 1 egg
- 1¼ cups all-purpose flour
- ½ tsp baking soda
- ¼ tsp ground cloves
- Powdered sugar, to dust

Method

1. For the filling, bring the ground poppy seeds, milk, sugar, honey, and butter to a simmer in a small saucepan and cook, stirring, 5–8 minutes, until thick and spreadable. Stir in the lemon zest and salt and cool completely. (You'll need about ¾ cup.)
2. Beat the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in the lemon zest and egg. Stir in the flour, baking soda, and cloves until well mixed. Roll the dough between two pieces of wax paper into a 12×10-inch rectangle about ¼ inch thick, and refrigerate 30 minutes, until firm.
3. Heat the oven to 350°F and grease a large baking sheet. Peel off the top sheet of paper, spread the filling over the dough to within ¼ inch of the edges, and roll up tightly from a long (12-inch) side, peeling off the bottom paper as you go. Pinch the seam to seal. Cut into ½-inch slices and set them 1 inch apart on the sheet.
4. Bake 10–12 minutes, until the edges are light brown. Cool slightly, then move to a rack and dust with powdered sugar.