

CHOCOLATE-PEPPERMINT COOKIES

(slightly modified from purewow.com)

for the filling:

1 bag of Moroccan mint tea
½ cup (115g) heavy cream
200g finely chopped white chocolate
Pinch of fine sea salt
pink gel food coloring

for the cookies:

10 tablespoons (142g) unsalted butter, at room temperature
135g granulated sugar
53g brown sugar
1 large egg, at room temperature
1 large egg yolk, at room temperature
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
¼ teaspoon peppermint extract
240g all-purpose flour
45g black cocoa powder
¼ teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon fine sea salt
pink sanding sugar to decorate

Place the tea bag and heavy cream in a small saucepan. Heat until simmering, close the pan and let it infuse for 5 minutes. Remove the tea bag, squeezing it hard. Re-heat the cream and when it is almost boiling, add to a bowl with the white chocolate, together with a pinch of salt. Let sit for a minute, then stir gently until fully dissolved. Add a tiny drop of pink gel food coloring (optional). Transfer to the fridge for several hours. When ready to use, whip it with a handheld blender but do not over- whip or the ganache might seize up.

Make the cookie dough: In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream the butter, granulated sugar and brown sugar until light and fluffy, about 5 minutes. Add the egg and egg yolk; mix well to combine. Thoroughly scrape down the side of the bowl, then add the vanilla and peppermint extracts and mix to combine.

In a small bowl, whisk together the flour, cocoa powder, baking powder and salt; add to the mixer and mix until just incorporated. Scrape down the side of the bowl, then mix again briefly on low speed to make sure everything is combined. Divide the dough in half and form each half into a 1-inch-thick disk. Wrap each disk tightly in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 1 hour (and up to overnight).

Heat the oven to 325 F.

On a lightly floured surface, roll out one portion of dough to $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thick. Use a 2-inch round cookie cutter to cut the dough and then transfer each round to one of the prepared baking sheets. Repeat with the second disk of dough. Use a mini cookie cutter to cut a shape from the center of each cookie on the second tray; remove the cutouts. Bake until the cookies are set at the edges, 8 to 10 minutes, rotating the trays between racks halfway through baking. Cool completely.

Assemble the cookies: Flip the cookies without cutouts over, then pipe the filling into the center of each cookie, leaving a $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch border. Place one of the cookies with a cutout on top and press down slightly until the filling reaches the edge of the cookies. Sprinkle sanding sugar on the opening. Let set for 30 minutes before serving. They keep well at room temperature for several days.