

HALLOWEEN SESAME-ORANGE ALMOND COOKIES

(from the Bewitching Kitchen)

4 eggs (separated)
1 cup sugar
7 oz almond paste
2 + 1/2 sticks unsalted butter
1 tsp almond extract
2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 tsp salt
2 tsp black sesame paste
1/2 tsp orange emulsion
black and orange food coloring
raspberry jam (I used SOLO raspberry filling)
7 oz semi-sweet chocolate
small amount of white chocolate and orange fat-soluble dye for decoration (optional)

Heat your oven to 350°F and line 3 baking pans (13 by 9 inch) with parchment paper. Reserve.

In an electric mixer, whisk the egg whites using the whisk attachment on medium-high speed and add 1/4 cup of the sugar a little at a time. Beat at high speed until you have glossy stiff peaks then transfer to another bowl and reserve until needed.

Clean the bowl and switch to the paddle attachment. Mix the almond paste and remaining 3/4 cup sugar until well incorporated, about 3 minutes. They will look like small pebbles. Add the butter and beat until pale and fluffy, another 3 minutes. Next add in the yolks and almond extract until well combined. Reduce the speed to low, then add flour and salt and mix until combined. Fold half of the egg white mixture into almond mixture to lighten, then fold in remaining whites gently until everything is mixed all together.

Weigh the batter and add 1/3 to one bowl, 2/3 to another. To the smaller portion, add the sesame paste and the black dye, mix well to incorporate. Add the orange extract and orange dye to the other bowl.

Spread the black batter into one of the prepared pans. Spread the orange batter divided in the two other pans. Bake each pan for about 12 minutes, until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Let them cool completely. Now it is time to assemble.

Place one orange layer onto a baking sheet with some parchment paper. Spread a thin layer of jam, then place the black layer on top, and spread another thin layer of the jam. Place the second orange layer on top of the black and cover with plastic wrap. Place another baking sheet on top with some weight and let it chill in the fridge for 4 hours.

Remove the weight and plastic and bring layers to room temperature (so that the chocolate won't set too fast when you spread it). Melt chocolate in a microwave at 50% power until smooth. Trim the edges of the assembled layers and spread a thin layer of the chocolate on top of the cake. Place it back in the fridge to chill and until chocolate is firm. Cover with a sheet of parchment paper, place another baking sheet on top, carefully flip the cake. Spread a thin layer of chocolate and chill again until firm. Melt some white chocolate and dye it with fat-soluble orange dye, then make swirls on top (optional). With a serrated knife cut the cookie/cake in rectangles while still very cold.