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Day 11



Twinked Low-Fat Crinkle Cookies (image above Patty & Greg in the shop they designed & built)

Chocolate Crinkle Cookies have always been a holiday favorite at our house.

Here is the story of how our favorite rendition of this cookie came to be: A few years after we opened our first retail/commercial kitchen, Starbucks Coffee Company came knocking at the Spirit Bear Co. backdoor.

We were already baking for every one of their competitors. It made sense Starbucks would want in on the cookie action, too.

So, in 1995, we started baking for 110 Starbucks Midwest locations on a weekly basis. I was making my colorful shortbread cookie sculptures by the thousands and Greg came up with the idea of shipping all of our Starbucks orders via UPS - Starbucks had no distribution so the cookies were delivered in big, brown trucks, *something that Starbucks had never considered*. We saw the UPS driver so often, we knew each other's astrological signs, regularly played lottery numbers, and pet's names. Thankfully, the cookies "sold through" (sold out) each week - which we found out later was the only acceptable Starbucks goal (and ours as well). It kept Starbucks food buyer Joan happy and kept Starbucks ordering from our little business while providing exposure and consumer validation as Greg insisted that our products be packaged in our signature clear bag with raffia ribbon which also included the unique Spirit Bear identity, story and website URL, we were very early adapters of the web for our business.

After a year or so, I was asked to make other bakery items - different than the cookies I was making already. Every month or so, Joan and I would meet. We would discuss products she would ideally like to see on the shelves in the stores. These designs and products were to be exclusive to Starbucks only.

At one such meeting, Joan handed me a beat-up, hand written copy of what looked like a recipe. She said it was an original recipe by a friend of hers, Alice Medrich. Alice had written an amazing cookbook a few years prior called "Chocolat". She asked had I heard of the book. Of course, I had heard of the book. I owned the book! I took the recipe from her and said "sure, let me price this out and I'll get back to you tomorrow", assuming she wanted me to produce the recipe as-is.

No. That's not what she had in mind.

Day 11

Tweaked Low-Fat Crinkle Cookies

The Fat-Free Craze was on big time and Starbucks already had me producing my Fat Free Breakfast Muffins for their upscale locations. She wanted me to tweak Alice's Crinkle Cookie recipe to 2 grams fat or less per serving - down from 15 grams per cookie. Tall order, I thought...not to mention heresy! I was being asked to adulterate an Alice Medrich formulation and apparently, it was ok with Alice.

Joan had me make batch after batch. After the third batch was delivered, I asked her what was wrong. I knew they tasted good. They are candy-like right out of the oven...crunchy on the outside and chewy on the inside - and after a few days, evenly soft all over. Besides, we had already made hundreds to sell in the retail shop and couldn't keep up. What was happening, she confessed later, is that her fellow employees who knew me and knew about the project were sneaking them out of her office, leaving her none.

She finally tasted a few of the cookies and here is the recipe that was **approved - unanimously!**

Tweaked Crinkles

In the bowl of a Kitchen Aid® mixer fitted with a paddle, blend the following:

- 2 XL egg whites
- 3 Tablespoons Butter
- 4 Tablespoons Corn Syrup
- 1 cup white sugar
- 1 cup light brown sugar
- 1 cup plus 2 Tablespoons Cocoa Powder (1/4 pound scaled)
- 2 cups AP flour
- 1/2 teaspoon Kosher Salt
- 1/2 teaspoon FRESH baking soda
- 2 Tablespoons water
- 2 teaspoons Vanilla Extract

Blend completely. Cover and let rest one hour at room temperature.

Set oven to 350 degrees. Line 3 or 4 cookie sheets with Reynolds® quick-release foil or silpat silicone liners. These cookies stick if baked on regular trays or parchment.

Pour into a bowl:

- 1 Cup Confectioner's Sugar

With a small ice cream scoop (2 ounce size), portion all the dough.

Place dough scoops into the Confectioner's Sugar. Roll around to coat, making them round while coating them completely in the sugar powder.

Place coated dough balls on prepared cookie sheets at least 2" apart. Using a flat bottomed glass, flatten each ball to about 1/2" thickness. Repeat with all the dough.

Cook at 350 degrees for 7-9 minutes. Do not overbake! They should be completely crisp on the outside but almost liquid in the center. They will have sizeable cracks - also an indicator they are close to being done.

Let cool completely. Store immediately in air-tight container (or individually wrap each cookie in a Ziploc® sandwich bag). Store in fridge up to 2 weeks.