

Baked Apricot Rosemary Bars

Adapted from *Nuts in the Kitchen* by Susan Loomis (via David Lebovitz' blog)



ROSEMARY DOUGH:

12 tablespoons unsalted butter, cubed, at room temperature

1/2 cup powdered sugar

1/2 teaspoon salt

3/4 teaspoon vanilla extract

grated zest of half a lemon

1 1/2 teaspoons fresh rosemary, finely chopped
[up to 2 tsp if you like rosemary]

1 3/4 cups flour

APRICOT FILLING:

2 cups dried apricots, use California apricots

1 1/2 cups white wine, or use water

1/2 cup granulated sugar

3 tablespoons honey

2 tablespoons brandy

1 pinch salt

CRUMB TOPPING:

1/2 cup flour

1/2 cup packed dark brown sugar

1/3 cup pecans, coarsely chopped, or almonds

1 pinch salt

4 tablespoons unsalted butter, cubed, chilled

Servings: 16

1. Line a 9-inch square pan with aluminum foil then butter the insides or spray with cooking spray.

(In the original recipe, the authors said to grease the pan then line it with parchment paper, leaving an overhang on two sides of the pan.)

2. Make the rosemary dough by creaming the butter with the powdered sugar and salt in the bowl of a stand mixer, or by hand, until it's light and fluffy. Add the vanilla, lemon zest, and rosemary, then gradually add in the 1 3/4 cup flour, mixing until the dough is smooth.

3. Transfer the dough to the prepared baking pan and pat it flat into the bottom of the pan using lightly floured hands Press it all the way out to all the edges. Refrigerate the dough-lined pan for at least 30 minutes.

(No need to wash the mixer bowl; you can use it as is for the crumb topping in step #7.)

4. Make the apricot filling by combining the apricots, water (or wine), granulated sugar, honey, brandy, and a pinch of salt in a medium saucepan. Simmer over low heat for about 45 minutes, or until all the liquid has just about been absorbed. Let cool for a few minutes, stirring, then puree all of it (including any juices) in a food processor until smooth.

5. Preheat the oven to 350°F.

6. Bake the rosemary shortbread for 25 to 30 minutes, until golden brown. Once baked, let the shortbread cool to room temperature.

7. Make the crumb topping by mixing together the 1/2 cup flour, brown sugar, nuts, salt, and butter in the bowl of the stand mixer, with the paddle attachment, until the mixture just barely starts clumping together.

8. Spread the apricot filling over the shortbread in the pan evenly, then top with the crumb topping. Press the crumbly topping down just a bit to help it adhere to the apricot filling. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, until the topping is browned.

9. Remove from oven and let bars cool completely in pan. To slice, lift the bars out of the pan by grasping the edges of the foil. Slice into squares.

Storage: The bars can be stored at room temperature or in the refrigerator for up to three days.

Variation: For those of you wishing to use a different dried fruit, the yield on the apricot paste was 2 cups (about 500g), in case you wish to make a substitution.

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 316 Calories; 13g Fat (39.0% calories from fat); 3g Protein; 44g Carbohydrate; 2g Dietary Fiber; 31mg Cholesterol; 91mg Sodium. Exchanges: 1 Grain(Starch); 0 Lean Meat; 1/2 Fruit; 2 1/2 Fat; 1 1/2 Other Carbohydrates.

Carolyn T's Blog - Tasting Spoons
<http://tastingspoons.com>