

Brutti Ma Buoni

From Nelson's Kitchen
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From *Essentials of Classic Italian Cooking* by Marcella Hazan

This is are Piedmontese Almond Cookies. The name translates to "ugly but good" and indeed they are delicious.

Ingredients:

- 11 ounces of blanched and skinned almonds
- 1 1/4 cup of sugar
- 4 egg whites
- salt
- 1 teaspoon of vanilla extract

Procedure:

1. **Preheat the oven to 300F**
2. **Pulverize the almonds**
 - Mix the almonds with 1/4 cup of sugar in the bowl of a food processor..
 - Process until you obtain a fine mixture, do not overprocess or you will end up with almond butter.
3. **Prepare the merengue**
 - Bring with about 2 inches of water to a boil.
 - Place the egg whites and 1/2 a cup of sugar in the bowl of a mixer.
 - Reduce the fire to keep the water at a fast simmer.
 - Place the bowl over the water, stir constantly until you place your clean finger on the egg white and sugar mixture and feel that it is definitely warm.
 - Beat the mixture in the mixer until you obtain firm peaks.
 - Add the vanilla extract and the final 1/2 cup of sugar and beat for another 30 seconds.
4. **Fold the almonds**
 - Fold the pulverized almonds into the merengue with a rubber spatula.
5. **Bake the cookies**
 - Grease and lightly dust with flour a cookie sheet.
 - Place a piping bag, without the tip, over a large glass, folding the large end backwards around the glass rim.
 - Feel the bag with the merengue batter.
 - Pipe small round cookies in the baking sheet.

- If the cookies have a little tip, fold a clean kitchen towel, wet it and press it with your hands to remove excess water.
- Holding both ends of the folded towel, gently touch the top of the cookies to flatten the tips.
- Bake for about 30 minutes (or longer), until they acquire a very light brown color.
- Remove from the stove and let them cool for a minute or two.
- Gently remove them from the baking sheet and spread them over cooling racks.
- After they are completely cool, store in air-tight containers.