

# ALMOND BISCOTTI

Makes about 40

By Dennis W. Viau - modified from other recipes

Here's the thing about making your own biscotti: It's really easy, if a little messy, and they are inexpensive to make if you buy almonds in the warehouse store.

## Ingredients

10 ounces (280g) whole almonds, plus about 40 extra for garnish

4 cups (20 ounces/567g) flour\*

1¾ cups (350g) sugar

4 large eggs (about 57g each)

1 large egg; separated

1 teaspoon anise flavoring

¼ teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon baking soda

2 tablespoons raw sugar for garnish

## Directions

Heat the oven to 350°F (175°C) with a rack in the upper part of the oven. Set about 40 whole almonds aside for garnish. Roast the 10 ounces of almonds in the oven for 9 - 10 minutes. Remove and let cool.

Place the flour in a large bowl and set aside. Put sugar, eggs, separated egg yolk (reserve the egg white), and anise flavoring in a medium bowl and blend well with a whisk. Add salt and soda and mix. Pour egg mixture into the flour and blend until most of the flour is incorporated.

Chop the roasted almonds in a food processor or blender until most have been reduced to a powder but some large pieces (no larger than ¼ inch) still remain. Add chopped almonds to the flour mixture and blend until incorporated and dry enough to knead.

Turn the dough onto a floured surface and knead until smooth, about 2 minutes. It will be sticky.

Shape dough into two loaves, about 12 to 16 inches in length and place on a cookie sheet. Combine the egg white with 1 tablespoon water and mix well with a whisk to make an egg wash. Brush the top of the biscotti loaves with the egg wash and press whole almonds, turned on a slight diagonal, into the top of each loaf, about ¼ inch apart, in a line down the center. Brush again with egg wash and sprinkle each loaf with raw sugar.

Bake on the upper rack for 35 - 40 minutes at 350°F (175°C). Remove from the oven and slice diagonally, while still warm, ½ - ¾ inch thick (between the whole almonds), and arrange on the cookie sheet with air space between biscotti. Reduce oven to 275°F (135°C). Bake another 40 - 45 minutes. Remove from the oven and cool completely.

Store in an air-tight container.

\*There is more than one method of measuring flour. 1 cup sifted means sifting flour into a cup until it overflows and then scraping the excess off the top with a knife. 1 cup scooped is plunging a cup into a container of flour and then scraping the excess off the top. They each have different weight. I measure flour for baking by weight.

The **Step-By-Step** begins on the next page.



## STEP-BY-STEP

1



Assemble all your ingredients. Nothing special is required. You might be surprised how easy it is to make delicious biscotti that rivals the best you've tasted from a store or restaurant, and they will cost a lot less.

2



Arrange the 10 ounces of almonds on a cookie sheet and toast in a 350°F (175°C) oven for 9 to 10 minutes. Besides improving the nutty flavor of the almonds, I find the nuts will chop much easier in a food processor or blender if roasted in advance. Remove from the oven and let cool enough to be comfortable to handle.

3



While the almonds are cooling, prepare your other ingredients. Put the flour in a bowl and set aside. Divide one of the eggs and set the egg white aside to make an egg wash later. Mix the eggs, the yolk, sugar, and baking soda in a bowl. Add this mixture to the flour and combine until nearly all the flour is incorporated. You don't need to be too fussy about this step. You'll be kneading the dough later.

4



Chop the cooled almonds in a food processor or a blender. I've used both and I find the food processor a little easier to manage. Most of the nuts should be ground to a powder, but there should be some small chunks of almond visible. These chunks will add texture and a more appetizing appearance to the finished biscotti.

5



Add the chopped almonds to the dough mixture and continue combining. The dough will become stiff and sticky. When the mixture is too stiff to work with a spoon or spatula, knead it with your hands. I find it easier to knead it in the bowl and then turn the dough out onto the counter, dusted with flour, and continue kneading it a minute longer. As you knead, the dough will become less sticky.

6



Did I tell you it is sticky? This is the only messy part. I use a dull butter knife to scrape the dough off my fingers. Even though further kneading will reduce some of the stickiness, it will still stick to your hands.

7



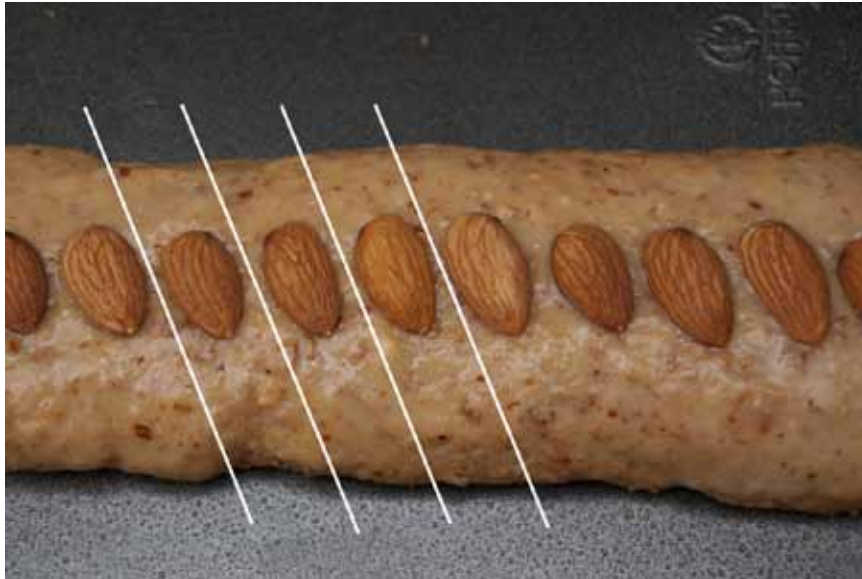
Divide the dough in half and shape each piece into a log that will fit on your cookie sheet. It helps to wet your hands a little when you shape the loaf. However, if I work quickly I can usually shape the dough without wetting my hands because at this stage it has lost some of its stickiness.

8



Here are the loaves on a cookie sheet. Mix the egg white you set aside earlier with a little water (about a tablespoon) to make an egg wash. Using a pastry brush, lightly paint a loaf with this egg wash and then arrange a row of whole almonds in a line down the middle, pressing them into the dough a little. Slant the almonds on a slight diagonal (see next picture) and leave about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an inch between them. You'll cut the biscotti between the almonds in a later step. I search through the bag of almonds and pull out 40 of the best looking ones for this garnish.

9



This illustrates how you will be cutting between the almonds later, thus the reason for arranging the almonds on a diagonal. Each biscotti will then have one almond decorating it.

10



Brush the loaf again with the egg wash and sprinkle with raw sugar. You can use different decorations that you might like. You might want to use no toppings at all and paint the top with melted chocolate later. My favorite way of garnishing biscotti is with almonds and raw sugar, but there are many possible alternatives.

11



After baking for about 35 to 40 minutes the loaf will be soft enough to cut. While the loaf is still hot and soft, cut between the almonds to separate the biscotti. As illustrated earlier, cut on a diagonal.

12



In the final step, reduce the oven temperature to 275°F (135°C). Arrange the separated biscotti on the cookie sheet again, with a little room between them. This is to allow the biscotti to completely dry in the second baking. Place in the oven and allow to bake an additional 40 to 45 minutes. Allow to cool. Store in an air-tight container.

13



Here is the final biscotti, ready to enjoy. With 40 almonds arranged on the two loaves, this recipe makes about 40 biscotti.

## Conclusion:

Hopefully you see how easily you can make your own biscotti. There are a lot of variations you might want to try. For smaller biscotti you can form the dough into three loaves rather than two. Rather than the anise flavoring you might try other flavors, such as hazelnut liqueur or almond extract. Some biscotti are frosted with chocolate or other icings. Other nuts worth trying are pistachios or hazelnuts. Old biscotti recipes use pine nuts. There is room for creativity.