Fancy Cookies Pair Well With Fresh Fruits

BY RUSS PARSONS Los Angeles Times (MCT)

Strolling the Santa Monica farmers market on a recent Saturday, thinking about dinner. Five pounds of that thumb-thick jumbo asparagus from Zuckerman Farms? Of course! I already had carrots and favas from my garden. I'd ordered a leg of lamb. But what's for dessert? Almond torte maybe? Lemon curd tart? But all that late-season citrus

- Oro Blancos, grapefruits, blood oranges, tangerines — I just couldn't resist them. So maybe I'd do a fruit salad with a spiced syrup? Or just tangerine sections sweetened a little with rosemary honey? Then, suddenly, my mind was made up for me: I tasted a wedge of Page mandarin from Armando Garcia's stand. The flavor was almost explosive: sweet, spicy, perfect all by itself. Honey? Syrup? Forget it, the juice was almost syrupy just as it was. There's nothing I could do to make this thing any better.

Still, even I'm not Chez Panisse-y enough to serve just a bowl of fruit and call it dessert. That's where cookies come in.

Just as we're heading into the heart of the fruit season, a simple cookie can be a cook's best friend. Right now we've got lateseason citrus like those mandarins, terrific sweet strawberries, and the first apri-

cots and cherries, then before you know it, peaches and nectarines. There's nothing that complements a great piece of fruit like a cookie.

I've got two old favorites that I fall back on regularly. The first is an almond macaroon. It's about as simple as a cookie can get - just five ingredients: almonds, sugar, salt, egg whites and a whiff of vanilla. Grind the almonds, sugar, salt and vanilla to a fine powder; beat the egg whites to soft peaks and pulse them into the almond mixture. Roll between wet palms (they're sticky as heck) and bake.

The cookies come out of the oven crisp on the outside yet moist and chewy on the inside, with a flavor that is deeply and purely almond. A perfect match for citrus or stone fruit.

My other go-to cookie is an old-fashioned snickerdoodle. Its flavor is a little more complex than the macaroon — a combination of browned wheat, the slight bitterness of cream of tartar and



sweet spicy cinnamon sugar. The recipe is my mom's, and I have a love-hate relationship with it. I can't tell you how many times I've labored all day over a big dinner party menu only to have everyone walk out telling me how great these danged cookies are.

I guess the only thing worse would be if they just talked about the fruit.

SNICKERDOODLES

Total time: 40 minutes, plus chilling time Servings: About 4 dozen

cookies Note: To make cinnamon sugar, mix 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon (or to taste) with a quarter cup of granulated sugar.

- 1 cup shortening
- $1 \frac{1}{2}$ cups sugar
- 2 eggs 23/4 cups flour
- 2 teaspoons cream of tartar
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt Cinnamon sugar



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Snickerdoodles are often described as a sugar cookie but the addition of cinnamon ups the flavor.

1. Heat the oven to 350 degrees. In the bowl of a stand mixer using the paddle attachment, or in a large bowl using an electric mixer, cream together the shortening and sugar until light and fluffy. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating thoroughly be-

tween each addition.

2. In a separate bowl, sift together the flour, cream of tartar, baking soda and salt. Add to the shortening mixture, beating well. Gather the dough in a ball, wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate until firm, about 30 minutes.

3. Tear off walnut-size pieces of dough and roll each into a ball. Dust with cinnamon sugar and place on an ungreased baking sheet, spacing the cookies about 2 inches apart. Bake until the cookies are light brown and firm on top, 10 to 15 minutes; the tops will be deeply cracked, and the centers will still be somewhat soft.

4. Cool the cookies on the baking sheet for 5 minutes, then transfer to a cooling rack to finish. Store in an airtight container.

Each cookie: 91 calories; 1 gram protein; 12 grams carbohydrates; 0 fiber; 5 grams fat; 1 gram saturated fat; 8 mg cholesterol; 6 grams sugar; 54 mg sodium.

ALMOND MACAROONS

Total time: 1 hour

Servings: About 3 dozen cookies

1 pound blanched almonds, either whole or slivered

2 cups sugar 1/4 teaspoon salt 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract 3 egg whites

1. Heat the oven to 300 degrees. Grease 3 baking sheets. 2. Grind the almonds, sugar

and salt in a food processor. Add the vanilla extract and pulse to mix in.

3. Beat the egg whites to soft peaks. Add them to the food processor and pulse 3 or 4 times to mix in. The mixture should form a grainy batter.

4. Wet your hands (this keeps the dough from sticking). Tear off walnut-sized pieces of the dough and roll each between your palms into a ball.

5. Place the cookies about 2 to 3 inches apart on the baking sheets and bake until they are golden, about 25 minutes. Halfway through, rotate the sheets to get even browning. Remove from the oven and cool.

Each cookie: 119 calories; 3 grams protein; 14 grams carbohvdrates; 1 gram fiber; 7 grams fat; 1 gram saturated fat; 0 cholesterol; 12 grams sugar; 22 mg sodium.



something educational and hands-on for the kids.

"Learning how to use the poles and the bait and how to cast a fishing pole is really good for the kids to learn," Specht said. "It's a better experience and completely different when you can teach the kids with a hands-on experience, rather than just telling them what to do.'

Specht said it's always exciting to see the kids enjoy the event.

"The kids love seeing the bobber go underwater, actually catching the fish and getting their picture taken afterward," she said. "I would encourage anyone who is interested at all to come out with us. It's always a lot of fun."

The program also allows community members to take advantage of the resource the lake provides, Kallis said.

"Living in Yankton, you see a lot of people who fish for a lot of different reasons," she said. "There are some people who fish for food, and others who fish as a social activity because they really enjoy being outside.'

Kallis said the lake can be used not only as a resource for fishing, but also for teaching.

Because of the flooding that occurred last year, the Fishing Basics program was unable to be held last summer. Specht said that is why it is so important to take advantage of the class this year.

For more information about the program call the Chief White Crane Reacreation Area at 668-2985

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