

Zucchini Oatmeal Cookie Sandwiches with Lemon Cream Cheese Filling *from Urban Sacred Garden*



As a kid, Little Debbie Oatmeal Creme Pies were one of my absolute favorites. I would beg my mom to buy me a box at the grocery, and when she obliged I would take them home, eat them slowly and savor every bite. Magically, though it never occurred to me to replicate that childhood favorite, these tasty treats taste just like my childhood favorite. One guest at my dinner table that night commented that it was the best thing I'd ever made and that I'd made some really amazing things. My friend's son begged, "Please give my mom this recipe so she can make them all the time." But it is pure happenstance that this winning recipe was born.

Yield: 18 Cookie Sandwiches

INGREDIENTS

ZUCCHINI OATMEAL COOKIES

1 1/2 Cups All-Purpose Flour
1 Tsp Baking Soda
1 Tsp Cinnamon
1 Tsp Ground Nutmeg
1/2 Tsp Salt
1/2 Tsp Ginger
Dash Ground Cloves
1/2 Cup Granulated Sugar
1 Cup Brown Sugar, packed
8 Tbsp (1 Stick) Butter, room temperature
2 Eggs
2 Tsp Vanilla Extract

2 Cups (About 2 whole) Zucchini, shredded and drained*
2 Cups Old Fashioned Oats

LEMON CREAM CHEESE FILLING

8 oz. Cream Cheese, Room Temperature
8 Tbsp (1 Stick) Salted Butter, Room Temperature
2 Tsp Vanilla Extract
1 Tsp Lemon Extract (or 2 Tbsp Lemon Juice)
Fresh grated Zest from 2 Lemons
3 1/2 Cups Powdered Sugar, Sifted

*Squeeze all excess water out of Zucchini. Shred it onto a clean kitchen towel and twist over kitchen sink to squeeze out water. Squeeze a few times until water stops dripping heavily.

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper or a silicon baking mat and set aside.
2. In a large bowl whisk together All-Purpose Flour, Baking Soda, Cinnamon, Nutmeg, Salt, Ginger and Cloves. Set aside.

3. With an electric mixer cream together Sugar, Butter and Eggs until well blended.
4. Gradually add the Flour mixture into the Creamy mixture and combine with an electric mixer on low speed. Do not over-mix the dough, but ensure all ingredients are thoroughly combined and incorporated.
5. Turn off mixer, remove bowl and stir the Oats and Zucchini into batter.
6. Scoop the batter onto the prepared baking sheet in 2 Tbsp portions, about 2 inches apart. Place in pre-heated oven and bake for about 10-12 minutes until the Cookies are browned on the edges and begin to set in the middle.
7. Remove from the oven and allow to cool for a couple minutes and then move to a wire rack to cool completely. Cook in batches until all cookies are finished.
8. FILLING: While cookies are baking, make your filling. In a large mixing bowl cream together Cream Cheese, Butter, Vanilla, Lemon Extract and Zest. Once well blended, add Powdered Sugar 1 Cup at a time, beating continuously. Scrape down sides of bowl with a rubber spatula as needed. If filling seems too soft, chill for about 20 minutes to firm-up before making cookie sandwiches.
9. Cool cookies completely. Pair up matching cookies for sandwiches. Scoop a couple tablespoons of icing onto one cookie (on the side of the cookie that baked on the pan, that is the inside of your sandwiches) and smoosh between the cookies to make a sandwich.
10. Serve cookies at room temperature or chilled. Store in the refrigerator in an airtight container between servings. Enjoy!