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## KITCHEN CONNAISSEUR

### Maple Praline Shortbread Cookies



Shortbread makes an excellent gift because it actually improves with age. You can prepare the cookies several weeks in advance and store them in an air tight container. *(We've used star shaped and traditional rectangular shaped cookie cutters for our shortbread, pictured on the far right and in the back of our cookie box.)*

The very best shortbread are tender, which is more a result of how the ingredients are handled than a matter of substituting various sugars, butters, and flours. The secret is to handle the dough as little as possible. So take care not to over beat or over work the flour. We actually recommend using your hands to gently mix the ingredients....Good luck!

Makes approximately 40 cookies.

#### *ingredients*

<b>1/2 cup</b>	Maple Cappuccino Sauce
<b>1 1/2 cups</b>	Pecans - shelled, whole or pieces (this could also be hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, or walnuts)
<b>3/4 cup</b>	Sugar - white, granulated
<b>1 1/2 cups</b>	Butter - unsalted, room temperature
<b>1 tsp</b>	Vanilla - pure extract
<b>1 tsp</b>	Salt
<b>2 1/2 cups</b>	Flour - all purpose
<b>3/4 cup</b>	Flour - rice

#### *instructions*

##### **To prepare the praline:**

1. Pour the Maple Cappuccino sauce into a large skillet. On high heat bring the sauce to a boil. Add the pecans and stir constantly. Allow the mixture to boil for 30 – 60 seconds. Turn the mixture onto the prepared cookie sheet, spreading it in a thin layer. Place the cookie sheet into the refrigerator and cool for at least ½ hour.

2. Remove the pecans from the refrigerator. Break them into pieces and place them in a food processor. Pulse the pecans until they are coarsely chopped. Remove them from the food processor and place in an air tight container. Refrigerate until ready to use.

**To prepare the cookies:**

1. Place the sugar in a food processor and pulse 2 or 3 times to make the sugar finer. Add the butter and beat until just mixed. Add the vanilla and salt – beat until just mixed. Add 1 cup of the praline mixture and beat until just mixed.

2. In a mixing bowl, mix the all purpose and rice flour together. Turn the sugar and butter mixture into the bowl. With your hands or a large spoon gently knead the dough together. Divide the mixture into 3 equal pieces. Press each piece into a circle about 1/4" to 1/2" thick. Cover with plastic wrap and let rest in the refrigerator for a least 2 hours and preferably overnight.

3. Remove the shortbread dough from the refrigerator. Allow it to reach room temperature. Preheat the oven to 275°F. Prepare cookie sheets with parchment paper or silpats. Using a cookie cutter, cut the dough into the desired shape. Place the cookies on the cookie sheets. Bake in the center of the oven for 25 minutes or until a creamy colour. Remove from the oven and cool on cookie sheets. Transfer to cooling rack until completely cooled. Keep in air tight containers, in a dark cool place, for up to one month.