



Lemon and Thyme Wreath Cookies

Elegant and delicate, these beautiful cookies are sweet with just a hint of savory.

Yield: about 15 three-inch cookies

Ingredients

- 1 bag Pamela's Sugar Cookie Mix (13 oz.)
- 1 TBSP fresh thyme leaves or 1 tsp dried
- zest of 2 lemons, preferably Meyer lemons
- ¼ cup butter*, softened
- ¼ cup cold shortening (for dairy-free version, use only shortening with no butter = ½ cup)
- 1 egg* or egg replacer equivalent
- 1 TBSP fresh lemon juice, preferably Meyer lemons
- *recommended for best results

DECORATIONS:

- 1 egg white mixed with 1 TBSP water, or eliminate for egg-free version
- large sugar crystals
- fresh thyme, washed and dried, tips snipped off for decorating, leaves for cookie dough
- Royal Icing

EQUIPMENT:

- two round or scallop-edged cookie cutters, approximately 3" (outside) & 1 ½" (cut out)
- parchment paper

Directions

Snip thyme tips from bunch and reserve for decoration, separate leaves from stems and reserve for dough.

In a medium bowl, whisk together Sugar Cookie Mix and 1 TBSP thyme leaves, set aside. Zest lemon into bowl of stand mixer, add butter and shortening, mix on medium and beat until light colored, about 30 seconds. Add egg and lemon juice and mix. Once incorporated, mix on low and slowly add the Sugar Cookie Mix with thyme leaves, a scoop at a time. Scrape down sides and bottom of bowl, and mix until dough is thoroughly combined.

ROLLING THE DOUGH:

Spray two pieces of parchment paper with cooking spray. Place half the dough in center of one sheet and flatten slightly. Place second sheet on top, then roll to ¼" thick (do not do less than ¼" or the cookies will be too fragile and overcook). Dough will be very sticky. Lay dough with parchment on a sheet pan and place in the refrigerator for 1 to 2 hours or in the freezer for about 15 to 25 minutes, until quite stiff. Repeat with other half of dough. You can make dough ahead

and store in refrigerator on sheet pans wrapped in plastic so dough does not dry out (will hold 4 or 5 days).

Once dough is stiff, cut out cookies with larger cookie cutter, then using smaller cookie cutter to cut out center of each cookie to create a wreath. Work quickly to keep dough cold. Have a sheet pan covered with parchment ready for cut out cookies. Remove dough from edges and, while cold, pick up cookies with spatula, remove centers, and place on prepared sheet pan. If cookie dough starts to warm up and becomes hard to work with, put back in freezer and work on the next sheet of dough. Keep scraps, push them back together into a ball and re-roll. Dough can be re-rolled several times and chilled before cutting.

Pre-heat oven to 325° with rack in the center of oven. Lightly brush cookies a few at a time with reserved egg white mixed with 1 TBSP water. Sprinkle cookies with sugar crystals (if using), then place thyme tips like a clock at 12, 4 and 8 o'clock. You can start cooking this pan while you decorate the next one. Repeat until all cookies are decorated for each sheet pan. Bake cookies in the center of the oven one sheet pan at a time for 12 to 16 minutes, until edges just start to show color; cookies should be very pale. Add sugar pearls or other decorations while hot out of the oven and press into cookie very gently (some varieties will melt if you add before baking leaving an unsightly crevice). Cool completely before removing to a wire rack.

Once cool, decorate with Royal Icing, which can be made with Pamela's Vanilla Frosting Mix, to make the dots or other decorations. Let dry totally before storing in an airtight container layered with wax paper.

CHEF'S NOTES: To make a more savory version of this cookie add ¼ tsp extra salt, a pinch of cayenne, and omit the sugar crystals on top. If making with all shortening, cookies will be more fragile and they will rise and fall, leaving a more crackly top. They are not quite as pretty, but they still taste good. This dough must be kept cold to work with, except for when rolling.

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