



ANSON MILLS

Cigarette Wafers

Yield

10 to 15 cigarettes or tuiles

Time

5 minutes to make and 30 minutes to bake and shape

Baking Notes

Please pull the hard white nubs (chalazae) off the egg whites before weighing them.

This paste performs best if it is not too cool. It can be refrigerated and rested after mixing but return it to room temperature or warm slightly over a warm water bath before stenciling.

A rigid plastic lid about 8 inches in diameter can be used to create a round stencil on which to spread the batter. Using sharp scissors, cut away the lip of the lid to make a nice, flat round of plastic. With a fine-tip permanent marker and a 3½- to 4-inch round cookie cutter, trace a circle on the center of the plastic round; there should be a generous band around the perimeter. Cut out the circle with a pair of scissors, then scrub it thoroughly to remove any remaining ink.

A silicone mat—yes, it's essential. The wafers will bake fine on plain parchment, but cool too quickly to shape. If you have more than one silicone mat, work ahead with stencil and paste, but bake only one pan (two tuiles) at a time.

The relationship between tuile and baker does become more complicated throughout the process. It may, for instance, take a few attempts to gauge how thickly the paste should be spread on the stencil. Too thick and the baked cookie will not be delicate enough; too thin and the cookies will crack when rolled. The best weight is 0.4 to 0.5 ounces per wafer—not more. A regular teaspoon (not a measuring spoon) filled generously is about right. If the cookies cool too much before they're shaped, return them briefly to the oven to soften.

To roll cigarettes, slide a sharp, thin metal spatula under a round, flip it over so the shiny side is up, then roll it around a ¼-inch dowel directly on the silicone mat. Press down on the seam and roll back and forth to seal. The cookie will slide off easily when it has cooled. If forming cigarettes is hell on your fingers, go with basic tuiles.

If making tuiles, slide a sharp, thin metal spatula under the hot, just-baked round, lift it off the silicone mat, and lay the cookie over a slender rolling pin to cool.

Having silica packets on hand to keep the cigarettes or tuiles crisp is helpful. The cookies will keep for several days in a well-sealed container.

Equipment Mise en Place

For this recipe, you will need a digital kitchen scale; a rimless cookie sheet or a rimmed baking sheet; a silicone baking mat or two; a small saucepan; a medium-small bowl; a small whisk; a small offset spatula; a 2½- to 3-inch round plastic stencil (see Baking Notes); a silicone spatula; a regular teaspoon; a small, sharp metal spatula; and a ¼-inch wooden dowel around which to roll the cigarettes (or, if making tuiles, a slender rolling pin upon which to drape them).

Ingredients

1.3 ounces clarified butter, barely warm

2 ounces egg whites, chalazae removed

½ teaspoon vanilla extract

Pinch of fine sea salt

2.5 ounces sifted confectioners' sugar

1.5 ounces sifted Anson Mills Colonial Style Fine Cloth-Bolted Pastry Flour

Directions

1. Adjust a rack to the middle position and heat the oven to 350 degrees. Line a rimless cookie sheet with a silicone baking mat, or, if using a rimmed baking sheet, invert it and lay the mat on the surface.

2. Turn the clarified butter into a medium-small bowl. Add the egg whites and whisk to combine, then whisk in the vanilla and salt. Add the sugar and whisk until well combined. Add the flour and whisk lightly just until smooth. The paste will have a flowing, almost stretchy consistency.

3. Lay the stencil (see Baking Notes) on one side of the silicone mat. Spoon a regular teaspoonful (0.4 to 0.5 ounce) of paste into the center of the stencil. With the tip of small offset spatula, spread the paste into an even layer, then cant the spatula and sweep it upwards at the edge of the stencil to remove excess paste. Scrape the spatula against the rim of the bowl to remove excess paste, then scrape down the sides of the bowl with a silicone spatula. Lift off the stencil. Form another round on the other side of the silicone mat. Slide the baking sheet into the oven and bake until the cookies have splotchy golden spots and are slightly darker at the edges, 5 to 6 minutes; rotate the baking sheet halfway through if the cookies are browning unevenly.

4. Remove the baking sheet from the oven. Immediately slide a small, sharp, thin metal spatula under one of the rounds, then flip it over on the mat. Lay a ¼-inch dowel across the edge of the tile and tightly roll the cookie around the dowel. Press down on the seam and roll back and forth to seal, then slide the cigarette off the dowel. Repeat with the second round. (If making tuiles, immediately slide a small, sharp, thin metal spatula under one of the rounds, then flip it over on the mat. Lay the cookie over a slender rolling pin, then do the same with the second cookie. Let the tuiles cool, then lift them off the rolling pin.)

5. Wipe or scrape the silicone mat and repeat with the remaining paste, continuing to bake and form two cookies at a time until no paste remains. Store the cigarettes in an airtight container with a silica packet or two to keep them crisp. They will keep nicely for several days.