

Blue-ribbon Winning Raspberry Streusel Squares

Yep! These raspberry streusel squares won Linda Amendt a blue ribbon at the state fair. Win your own fans by mixing up a batch today.

(From Blue-ribbon Baking: Baking Tips to Help You Win Prizes by Lisa Kirvirist) In addition to simply baking and enjoying Linda Amendt's delicious winning recipe, pay particular attention to the well-written, detailed text and use of ingredients. (Read more tips for getting noticed at the fair>>)

"This is one of my very favorite cookies, complete with a tender crust with almonds, raspberry filling and a crumbly streusel topping.

"I like to use my own homemade seedless raspberry jam when I have a jar on hand.

"These squares received rave reviews from fair judges and won numerous blue ribbons and special awards including Best of Division at the Los Angeles County Fair in my home state of California, the largest county fair in the country." —Linda Amendt

Ingredients

Crust 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour 6 T. confectioner's sugar 1/8 tsp. baking powder 1/4 cup finely chopped roasted, unsalted almonds 2/3 cup unsalted butter, cut into pieces

Filling 1 cup seedless raspberry jam

Topping 1 cup all-purpose flour 1/3 cup granulated sugar 1/4 tsp. almond extract 1/3 cup unsalted butter, cut into pieces

Icing 3/4 cup confectioner's sugar 1 to 2 T. half-and-half (10 percent) cream or milk 1/8 tsp. almond extract

Preparation

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Line a 9-inch square baking pan with foil, and grease with unsalted butter or nonstick vegetable spray.

Crust: In a bowl, whisk together flour, confectioner's sugar and baking powder until well combined. Stir in almonds. Using a pastry blender, fork or your fingers, cut in butter until evenly combined and mixture resembles coarse crumbs and starts to come together.

Using the back of a spoon or your fingers, press crust evenly into the bottom of the prepared pan.

Filling: Stir raspberry jam to loosen it. Spread jam evenly over crust.

Topping: In a small bowl, whisk together flour and granulated sugar until well blended. Stir in almond extract. Using a fork or your fingers, work in butter until evenly combined and mixture resembles coarse crumbs and starts to come together. Crumble topping over top of jam.

Bake in preheated oven for 20 to 24 minutes or until lightly golden brown around edges. Let cool completely in baking pan on a wire rack.

Using foil extensions, lift cooled squares from pan and place on a cutting board. Fold down edges of foil away from sides. If foil sticks, gently run knife blade between squares and foil to loosen.

Icing: In a small bowl, combine confectioner's sugar, 1 tablespoon of the cream and the almond extract. Using a small whisk or a fork, blend until icing is smooth and thin enough to drizzle from a fork. Add more cream as needed to achieve the right consistency. Drizzle icing over cooled squares.

Let stand 20 minutes or until the icing is set. Using a long serrated knife, cut into 1 1/2-inch squares. Makes 36 squares.

Tip: Let icing set completely, then store squares between layers of wax paper in a tightly sealed container at room

temperature for up to five days.