

Witches' Finger Cookies

Yield: 5 dozen

Creep out everyone at your Halloween party with cookies that look like witches' fingers. You can use any shortbread cookie recipe, but here's one for you (and of course mine is better!):

1 cup sugar
1 cup butter, softened
1 egg
1 teaspoon almond extract
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 2/3 cups flour
1 teaspoon salt
3/4 cup whole almonds, blanched
2 squares of melting chocolate or chocolate bark



Combine the sugar, egg, butter, almond extract and vanilla in a bowl. Mix in the flour and salt. Cover and refrigerate the dough for about 30 minutes, or until firm.

When you're ready to shape the cookies, only take out a small portion of the dough at a time. Shape the cookies into fingers by rolling and working with your hands. Score the top of the cookie with a knife or spatula to make it look like the wrinkles in your knuckle. Press an imprint into the tip of the cookie with your finger to make a spot for the almond fingernail. Press an almond into the tip of each finger to look like a fingernail. Place on a cooking sheet lightly coated with non-stick cooking spray and bake at 325 F for 20-25 minutes or until the cookies are a very light golden brown. Let the cookies cool on a drying rack.

Use melting chocolate to go around the outside of the almond nail, giving a ghoulish appearance. Just melt the chocolate, put it in an icing piping bag, and cut a very small hole in the tip. Then pipe around the nail. If you use red melting chocolate the look will be even more dramatic. You can also make small drops of chocolate blood, or chocolate cuts on the cookies if you really want to gross out your guests.

The witches' finger cookies will make great party treats, but you can also bundle them up in a decorative container and use them for your Halloween party favors.

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