

Spicy Rock Cakes with Crystallized Ginger and Chocolate

Rock cakes are to scones as drop biscuits are to rolled biscuits

1 cup all-purpose flour
1 cup whole wheat flour (you can use all white flour if you wish)
1 tablespoon + 1 teaspoon baking powder
¼ cup brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt (Diamond)
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg (generous!)
¼ teaspoon allspice
¼ teaspoon ground ginger
¼ teaspoon ground cloves
1 tablespoon orange zest
2 tablespoons minced crystallized ginger
¾ cup chocolate chips
8 tablespoon cold butter, cut into 16 pieces
1 cup milk
1 teaspoon vanilla

Heat oven to 400° F.

1. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. Whisk flour, baking powder, salt, cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice, powdered ginger, cloves and sugar in a large bowl.
3. Cut the pieces of butter into the flour mixture using two knives, a pastry blender, or go to town and use a food processor, pulsing a few times until the mixture look like pebbly sand, which is another way of saying that the butter should be in a variety of sizes from pea, to nearly invisible. Toss the crystallized ginger (if using) and the chocolate chips (if using) in the flour mixture. Whisk the vanilla into the milk and pour over the flour-butter mixture. Quickly fold in the milk, until the flour is absorbed (a few dry bits here and there will be okay.) The batter should be thick, but moist
4. At this point, I like to walk away for 20 minutes or so to let the dough hydrate a little more.
5. Drop the batter by ¼ cup-sized mounds onto baking sheets, leaving 3 inches between each. Sprinkle with a crunchy brown sugar such as Demerara.
6. Bake for 15 minutes or until golden and firm to the touch.

I eat these with butter, which some may find gilding the lily.