

Aunty Anne's Mandel Bread (Jewish Biscotti-like almond chocolate cookies)

Proust had his madeleines, but for me it is the taste of my aunt's mandel bread that always brings back memories of family and togetherness – so important in these times when we aren't able to see the ones we love. My aunt has departed from this world, but her recipes live on. And so, by sharing this recipe and baking these cookies together, I hope honour her memory by bringing people together through food, as she did. Note: Mandel means almond in Yiddish. These are like Italian biscotti but a bit lighter and crunchier. They are excellent at any time of day (my aunt had them for breakfast). They keep well and make lovely gifts.

Recipe:

3 eggs
1 cup granulated sugar
1 cup vegetable oil
2 tsp vanilla
2 ½ cups all-purpose flour (I have substituted a gluten-free flour mix for baking, with excellent results).
2 tsp baking powder
1 tsp cinnamon
1 cup whole almonds, chopped finely (I grind mine in a food processor)
1 cup mini chocolate chips or chocolate sprinkles (I use ½ cup of each). If you don't like chocolate, you can add 1 cup of dried fruit (I like dried cranberries or chopped dried apricots).

Preheat oven to 325 degrees F.

Mix first 4 ingredients in a bowl. Mix remaining ingredients in another bowl. Pour wet ingredients into dry ingredients and fold until combined.

Divide dough into 4 pieces and shape into 4 long loaves (2 per cookie sheet). Bake for ½ hour.

Remove from oven and cool 5 minutes. Slice on the diagonal and separate slices a little.

Bake for an additional 10-15 minutes and remove from the oven to cook completely.

