Quarantining and lots of time at home over the past year has meant for me lots of time spent in the kitchen. Cooking, concocting new recipes, tweaking old recipes to make them healthier, trying new things in hopes of sharing them with all of you and baking. I’ve done lots of baking with my husband Jonathan over the last few months and let me tell you, this is a new one for me. I don’t always love to share this sacred space of mine behind the stove and oven with others so our duel baking has not always been harmonious. Shall I say I can be a bit “set in my ways” in the kitchen? But one thing that quarantine has taught me is that sharing my space with a cute and fun to be around sous chef has its perks and has really started to “sweeten” the process!

Recently Jonathan and I shared the kitchen to recreate a recipe that his “mum” in London made for him all the time growing up. We loved mum’s homemade biscotti but wanted to tweak it a bit to make it more of our own. Think less sweet, more nuts, add figs, more fiber! Mum’s biscotti version 2.0!

I started baking with spelt flour years ago when I realized that it was much higher in fiber and protein than regular white flour without ever sacrificing the taste of the recipe I was cooking. So, in our version of mum’s biscotti, we’ve substituted white flour with spelt. However, your biscotti will turn out just fine if all you have at home is white, I promise!

We also drastically reduced the sugar in our version of mum’s biscotti from one whole cup to only 1/3 cup, added a drop more lemon and of course, we had to add the chocolate. Wait, let me rephase that…I mean *Jonathan* had to add the chocolate - he is obsessed with his chocolate and I must say he knew what he was doing with this addition to the recipe. The missing sugar was not missed at all and the chocolate made this even more decadent than I could have imagined.

We also like to slice the biscotti thin (refer to the photos below to see what I mean). This way you eat more sans guilt!

Fresh out of the oven our biscotti comes out hard and crunchy yet a bit chewy thanks to the dried figs. The added pistachios give the biscotti an amazing crunchy, big, flavor. And, I’m telling you this biscotti will satisfy all those cravings for savory, sweet and crunch (you know how I love a good crunch) you may have in one delicious treat. I’ve been sharing the fruits of our labor with my Italian friends all winter and they assure me that they taste uber authentic…like real Italian Biscotti!

Quarantine and being tied to our homes for so long has been so hard on so many of us. On the brightside it’s offered me new opportunities like getting to cook and bake with Jonathan and it’s taught me new things like the fact that I just may be capable of sharing my kitchen!

Our biscotti is incredible dunked in coffee, I look forward to it every afternoon. I sit and read and dream about returning to Italy one day with Jonathan and eating authentic biscotti at a corner café. I hope that you’ll make this in your kitchen (alone or with someone you love :) and you are filled with hopeful dreams of new beginnings right around the corner.

Xx Janine

Notes: These Biscotti take about 15 minutes to make and under an hour baking time.
Remember - Biscotti are twice baked so keep an eye on baking times.

**Ingredients:**

1 Cup Spelt Flour (white all-purpose flour is fine to use)

1/3 cup white sugar

1 teaspoon vanilla essence

1 teaspoon baking powder

1 large egg - beaten well in a bowl

2/3 cup Pistachios - roughly chopped

8 dried Figs - roughly chopped, I like the Turkish dried figs - but any dried fig will do

Zest and juice of 1 medium lemon

1/2 cup dark chocolate - melted

1 large baking sheet pan covered with parchment paper

Instructions:

In a large bowl mix together flour, sugar, baking powder and vanilla.

Slowly add the beaten egg and mix until the dough is formed (it still may seem a bit dry but the lemon will make it more into a proper dough)

Add the zest of the lemon and the juice of that lemon.  The dough should start to form well now.

Add the figs and pistachios - mix in well.

With wet hands, separate the dough into 6 pieces.  Place each piece on the parchment covered sheet pan in a small log form (look at the photos) and press down to flatten just a bit.  Keep the logs about 1/2 an inch apart.

Bake at 350 F for 25 minutes then take them out of the oven.  Let them cool off 5 minutes then with large knife cut thin slices of each biscotti log - each log can give you 6-8 slices of Biscotti.

Reduce the heat to 300 F and bake for another 10 minutes.  Take out of the oven and let cool.

When the Biscotti are fully cooled drizzle the melted dark chocolate all over!