

CHOCOLATE-AMARETTI TORTES

Servings: 4

Tortes

4 ounces semisweet chocolate, chopped

3/4 cup sliced almonds, toasted

12 1 & 1/2 inch-diameter amaretti cookies (Italian macaroons), about 2.6 ounces total

1/4 tsp cinnamon

pinch of salt

1/2 cup unsalted butter, room temperature

1/2 cup sugar

3 large eggs

Topping

3/4 cup chilled whipping cream

1 1/2 tsp powdered sugar

1/2 tsp almond extract

2 amaretti cookies, crumbled

Preparation:

For tortes:

Position rack in center of oven and preheat to 350F.

Butter four 3/4-cup custard cups or souffle dishes. Dust with flour; tap out excess. Line bottom of cups

with parchment paper rounds. Place on rimmed baking sheet

Stir chocolate in top of double boiler set over simmering water until melted and smooth. Using on/off turns, blend almonds, amaretti, cinnamon, and salt in processor until finely ground.

Transfer to medium bowl. Add butter, sugar, and eggs to processor; mix until blended and smooth, occasionally scraping down sides of bowl, about 3 minutes. Add cookie mixture and melted chocolate. Using on/off turns, process just until blended. Divide batter among custard cups. Bake until tops of tortes are dry and puffed and tester inserted into centers comes out with moist crumbs attached, about 30 minutes. Transfer cups to rack; cool for 15 minutes. Run small knife around edges of cups to release tortes. Turn tortes out onto rack and turn right side up; cool. (Can be made 3 days ahead. Wrap in plastic and store at room temperature)

For topping:

Beat together cream, sugar and almond extract in medium bowl until cream holds peaks. (Can be made 4 hours ahead; refrigerate).

Place 1 torte on each of 4 plates. Top with dollop of whipped cream, sprinkle with crumbled amaretti, and serve.

Market tip:

Amaretti cookies are available in 2 sizes. The larger ones (used in this recipe) are bundled in pairs in colorful wrappers.

Slightly smaller ones are packaged and unwrapped in sealed plastic bags. If using the smaller cookies, measure by weight (2.6 ounces total), not count