

CARAMEL DATE AND WALNUT ROLLS



Makes 5 dozen

60 moist dates (1 pound), pitted
60 walnut halves or about 1½ cups large walnut pieces
4 tablespoons butter, softened
½ cup light brown sugar
1 egg, beaten
½ cup sour cream
1¼ cups flour
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon baking soda
¼ teaspoon baking powder

Brown Butter Glaze (see below)
Fleur de sel for finishing

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Stuff each date with a walnut half or 2 to 3 pieces. Beat butter until creamy. Slowly add sugar, beating until smooth and blended. (I like to use a bowl and wooden spoon instead of an electric mixer.) Add egg, beat well, and stir in sour cream. Stir together dry ingredients, and add to butter mixture, beating just until smooth.

Dip each stuffed date into batter and place on ungreased or parchment-lined cookie sheets, leaving about 1 inch between each. Batter will not form a smooth coating over dates but will look patchy. Bake 8 to 10 minutes or until lightly golden around edges. Transfer to a cooling rack set over a sheet pan and drizzle glaze over date rolls while still warm. Sprinkle a few grains of fleur de sel over each cookie. Cool completely before packing into gift bags. May be frozen up to 2 months.

Brown Butter Glaze

1 cup powdered sugar
6 tablespoons butter
¼ cup cold water

Sift sugar. Heat butter in saucepan over medium heat, swirling pan until butter is nut brown (butter will foam and then clear). Remove from heat and stir in sugar and water. Return pan to heat and cook until the mixture becomes a syrupy glaze.

*Adapted from The Fannie Farmer Baking Book by Marion Cunningham
(Grammercy, 1996).*