**HAUSFREUNDE COOKIES**

These gorgeous chocolate-dipped almond-apricot sandwich cookies are somewhat labor intensive, but well worth the effort.

Makes 2dozen sandwich cookies

**INGREDIENTS:**

1. 2 cups all-purpose flour
2. ¼ cup plus 1 Tbs. granulated sugar
3. 1/4 Tsp. kosher salt
4. 1-1/2 sticks cold unsalted butter, cubed
5. 1 large egg, beaten
6. ½ Tsp. pure vanilla extract
7. About ½ cup apricot jam
8. 7 oz. almond paste
9. ¾ cup confectioners’ sugar
10. 5 oz. bittersweet chocolate chopped
11. 24 walnut halves, toasted

**DIRECTIONS:**

In a food processor, pulse the flour with the granulated sugar and salt. Add the butter and pulse until the mixture resembles coarse meal with some pea-size pieces remaining. Add the egg and vanilla and pulse until the dough just comes together. Scrape out onto a work surface and pat onto a work surface and pat into a disk. Wrap in plastic and refrigerate until chilled, about 1 hour.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. and line 2 large rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper. On a lightly floured work surface, roll out the dough ¼ inch thick. Using a 2-inch round cookie cutter, stamp out cookies as close together as possible: transfer to the prepared baking sheets. Gather the scraps, reroll and stamp out more cookies. You should have a total of 48.

Bake the cookies for about 20 minutes, until golden; rotate the baking sheets from top to bottom and front to back halfway through baking. Transfer to a rack to cool.

In a small saucepan, warm the jam over moderate heat, stirring, until runny, about 3 minutes. Brush a thin layer of jam on 24 of the cookies and top with the remaining cookies.

In a medium bowl, combine the almond paste with the confectioners’ sugar and knead until blended. Roll out the almond paste 1/8 inch thick between 2 sheets of parchment paper. Using a 2-inch round cookie cutter, stamp out 24 rounds. Brush the top of each cookie sandwich with another thin layer of jam and top with the rounds of almond paste.

Ina microwave-safe bowl, heat the chocolate at high power in 30 second bursts until just melted. Stir until smooth. Dip the top of each sandwich cookie in the chocolate, just enough to coat the almond paste; transfer to the baking sheet. Top each cookie with a walnut half. Let the chocolate set before serving.

The cookies can be stored at room temperature in an airtight container between wax paper for up to 5 days.