

December 20, 2004

This recipe was inspired by several sweet/spicy nut recipes that I have tried over the years. This is my favorite because the combination of maple and brown sugar with the bite that comes from the ginger and cayenne makes them completely addictive. Serve them in small bowls around the house when you're entertaining for the holidays. They are great with a fun cocktail, like the Pomegranate Martini or even with a sparkling wine, like Italian Prosecco. The nuts also make excellent hostess gifts, packed into decorative jars with a note on how to best to enjoy them (tossed in a salad, crushed up as a coating for small rounds of goat cheese, or straight out of the container). Your friends will love them and so will you!

Tante Marie's Spicy Nuts

Ingredients

4 tablespoons butter
3 tablespoons pure maple syrup
3 tablespoons dark brown sugar
3 thin slices fresh ginger
1 teaspoon ground ginger
1/2 teaspoon ground cardamom
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1/4 teaspoon Tabasco sauce, or to taste
1/4 teaspoon Cayenne pepper
1 pound shelled pecans, almonds or walnuts

Instructions

To make the pecans, preheat the oven to 300 degrees. Line a baking sheet with foil or a Sil-Pat.

Combine the butter, syrup, brown sugar, ginger, ground ginger, cardamom, salt, Tabasco, and cayenne in a small saucepan and simmer over low heat for 2-3 minutes, stirring often until sugar is completely dissolved. Place the nuts in a large bowl and pour the glaze through a strainer into the bowl. Toss the nuts well to coat them evenly with the glaze. Spread the nuts in a single layer on the prepared baking sheet and bake 30-40 minutes, stirring at 15 minute intervals, until nuts are lightly browned and almost dry when you toss them. Slide the foil or Sil-Pat off the baking sheet and onto a rack to cool the nuts completely.

Nuts can be made ahead and stored in airtight containers at room temp. or in the freezer, for up to one month.