



Crazy For Crackers!

I love crackers. A good cracker is a satisfying snack and it can be topped with so many interesting things: cheese, of course; tuna; smoked oysters; herring; sun-dried tomatoes; paté; dips; cream cheese... whatever comes to mind, it can probably be placed upon a cracker.

My attraction to crackers goes way beyond saltines and water biscuits. I look for something with some character. The American term cracker, rather than the more British "biscuit," comes from the crackling sound made during baking, and is usually applied to salty and savory flavors, as opposed to a cookie, which is sweet.

But, truly, I am disappointed in the crackers available at the markets. Mostly, they taste like sawdust held together with a bit of water. For a while, I could get Margaret's Artisan Flatbread Crackers at Whole Foods or our local Community Health Food Store. But, they stopped carrying them because of their short shelf life. And besides, they are \$5 a box. Ridiculous.

My friends, who mostly think I am out of my mind anyway, say things upon introducing me like, "She makes her own crackers!" But, having made them once, I am addicted. The dough can be made ahead and frozen, or the crackers can be made ahead and stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to a week.

There are many variations to the crackers below: skip the sesame seeds and add rosemary, dehydrated onion, garlic or other herbs or seeds.

Flatbread Crackers

3 cups organic white flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
2 teaspoons salt
1 stick (1/2 cup) unsalted butter,
cut into pieces
1 cup plain yogurt
1 1/4 cups sesame seeds, toasted

2 large eggs
2 tablespoons brown sugar
1 tablespoon soy sauce

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Mix flour, baking powder, and salt in a food processor until blended. Add butter and pulse until mixture resembles coarse meal.

Add yogurt and one cup sesame seeds and mix until mixture forms a dough. Turn out into a plastic wrap. Chill 10 minutes. Divide dough into quarters.

Stir together eggs, brown sugar, and soy sauce until sugar is dissolved to make glaze.

Divide 1 dough quarter into 12 equal portions and form each into a 4-inch log with your hands. On a lightly floured surface, roll out each log into an approximate 12 inch strip. Transfer strips to 2 baking sheets layered with parchment paper. Brush strips with glaze and sprinkle with sesame seeds.

Bake in 350° for 20 minutes, rotating sheets if necessary, or until glaze is golden brown. Transfer to racks to cool.