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VANILLA-BEAN BISCOTTI FROM LHJ ONLINE <http://www.lhj.com>

These twice-baked tender cookies--easier to make than you think--are wonderful served with fresh fruit or ice cream. We think using vanilla bean is worth the extra expense, but you can also substitute 2 teaspoons vanilla extract. Tip: Store extra cookies in an airtight container at room temperature up to 2 weeks.

Prep time: 20 minutes

Baking time: 60 to 65 minutes

Degree of difficulty: easy

1 vanilla bean, split
 3 cups all-purpose flour
 1 tablespoon baking powder
 1/4 teaspoon salt
 3 large eggs
 3/4 cup sugar
 1/2 cup butter or margarine, melted and cooled

1. Scrape seeds from vanilla bean with small knife.
2. Arrange oven racks in center and lower thirds of oven. Heat oven to 325 degrees. Grease a large cookie sheet. Combine flour, baking powder and salt in bowl. Beat eggs in mixer bowl at medium-high speed, 1 minute. Gradually beat in sugar. At low speed, beat in butter and vanilla seeds. Beat in dry ingredients just until blended.
3. Divide dough into thirds. On a lightly floured surface, roll each piece into a 14x1 1/2-inch log. Arrange logs 2 1/2 inches apart on prepared cookie sheet.
4. Bake logs on bottom oven rack 30 to 35 minutes, until firm. Cool on pan on wire rack, 15 minutes.
5. Reduce oven temperature to 275 degrees. Carefully transfer logs to a large cutting board. With serrated knife, gently slice each log diagonally into 1/2-inch-thick slices. Arrange slices cut side down 1 inch apart on two large ungreased cookie sheets.
6. Bake slices 30 minutes, switching and rotating cookie sheets after 15 minutes, until pale golden. Cool on wire racks. Makes 4 dozen.