Brutti Ma Buoni

From Essentials of Classic Italian Cooking by Marcella Hazan

This is are Piedmontese Almond Cookies. The name translates to “ugly but good" and indeed they are delicious.

Ingredients:

- 11 ounces of blanched and skinned almonds
- 1 1/4 cup of sugar
- 4 egg whites
- salt
- 1 teaspoon of vanilla extract

Procedure:

1. **Preheat the oven to 300F**
2. **Pulverize the almonds**
   - Mix the almonds with 1/4 cup of sugar in the bowl of a food processor.
   - Process until you obtain a fine mixture, do not overprocess or you will end up with almond butter.
3. **Prepare the merengue**
   - Bring with about 2 inches of water to a boil.
   - Place the egg whites and 1/2 a cup of sugar in the bowl of a mixer.
   - Reduce the fire to keep the water at a fast simmer.
   - Place the bowl over the water, stir constantly until you place your clean finger on the egg white and sugar mixture and feel that it is definitely warm.
   - Beat the mixture in the mixer until you obtain firm peaks.
   - Add the vanilla extract and the final 1/2 cup of sugar and beat for another 30 seconds.
4. **Fold the almonds**
   - Fold the pulverized almonds into the merengue with a rubber spatula.
5. **Bake the cookies**
   - Grease and lightly dust with flour a cookie sheet.
   - Place a piping bag, without the tip, over a large glass, folding the large end backwards around the glass rim.
   - Feel the bag with the merengue batter.
   - Pipe small round cookies in the baking sheet.
• If the cookies have a little tip, fold a clean kitchen towel, wet it and press it with your hands to remove excess water.
• Holding both ends of the folded towel, gently touch the top of the cookies to flatten the tips.
• Bake for about 30 minutes (or longer), until they acquire a very light brown color.
• Remove from the stove and let them cool for a minute or two.
• Gently remove them from the baking sheet and spread them over cooling racks.
• After they are completely cool, store in air-tight containers.