

Florentine Bars

1 cup salted butter, at room temperature
1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups sugar
1 egg plus one egg yolk
2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups cake flour
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup plus 6 tbsp. unsalted butter
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup each honey and heavy whipping cream
12 oz. sliced almonds
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup raisins, finely chopped
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup tart dried apricots (we prefer Blenheim), finely chopped
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup tart dried cherries, finely chopped

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. In a large bowl, cream salted butter with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar until light and fluffy. Add egg and egg yolk and beat to combine. Gradually add flour and mix well (dough will be very soft). Transfer to a floured 16 by 11 in. parchment paper. With a floured rolling pin, roll dough to same size as parchment. Trim any overhang, then transfer dough (on parchment) to a large rimmed baking pan. Bake until golden brown, about 12 minutes. Remove from oven (leave oven on) and set aside.
2. In a medium saucepan over medium heat, stir together unsalted butter, remaining $1 \frac{1}{4}$ cups sugar, honey, and cream. Cook mixture, stirring frequently, until it registers 250 degrees on a candy thermometer. Remove pan from the heat and stir in almonds, raisins, apricots, and cherries.
3. Using a spatula, gently spread warm topping over shortbread. Bake until topping is caramelized and almonds are lightly browned, about 10 minutes. Remove from oven; while still warm, cut into 2 inch squares. Cook completely. Makes 35 bars, or 70 if each bar is then cut in half.