



Bizcochitos

NIBBLEDISH CONTRIBUTOR

Ingredients

Cookies:

- 6 cups flour, plus more for rolling
- 1 tbsp baking powder
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 pound lard
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 1 tbsp anise seed
- 1/2 cup brandy

Topping:

- 1/4 cup sugar (colored sugar is nice, but optional)
- 1 tbsp ground cinnamon

Instructions

These are traditional New Mexican celebration cookies. We mainly serve them at Christmas, but they're fairly popular at weddings too. This is my mom's recipe, which I have replicated loyally to great effect.

A note about the lard: Yes, I really use manteca, rendered pork fat, in my cookies. It's

the only time of the year I ever do -- same for my mom; it's why this recipe is designed around the one-pound block, so she doesn't have leftover lard kicking around. If you're vegetarian or Jewish or in any other way averse to pig, you can substitute shortening straight across. It just won't taste or feel the same.

1. A day or so in advance of making the cookies, combine the brandy and anise in a ramekin or other small dish. Cover and let sit at room temperature until you're ready to make them. You can do this as long as three days in advance.
2. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (180 C).
3. Sift flour together with baking powder and salt.
4. Dump the lard into the bowl of your stand mixer* and get it going. Add the sugar and beat until it's thoroughly integrated and starting to get fluffy.
5. Beat eggs together with brandy-anise mixture until well blended. Add to lard mixture and beat until combined.
6. Add flour mixture a little at a time until it is fully integrated. This will take a little bit of time, especially if you aren't using a stand mixer.
7. Dust your countertop with flour and turn the dough out onto it. Pat the dough into a ball, then roll it out to about 1/4 inch thick. Cut with cookie cutters and transfer the shapes to a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper.
8. Combine the topping ingredients and liberally sprinkle onto the tops of the prepared cookies.
9. Bake 10-12 minutes, until just barely brown around the edges. Move to a cooling rack immediately for at least ten minutes.

*Do you really need a stand mixer for this? No ... but yeah. I don't have one, but every time I bust out this recipe I wish I did. What you're making is a seriously stiff biscuit dough, one that you don't really want to knead but is difficult to stir. I've broken more than one wooden spoon and actually set fire to an electric hand mixer making bizcochitos. Yet, year after year, I buy the lard and put my appliances at risk, willing to hear another mixer grind into oblivion for the glory of the cookie.