



SPECULAAS COOKIES

YIELDS: 18 MEDIUM-SIZED COOKIES OR ABOUT 6 DOZEN
KRUIDNOTEN

Speculaas and Kruidnoten (made from the same ingredients) are traditionally served in the Netherlands on and around Sinterklaas Day. Nowadays they are available year-round and all over the world. The secret to delicious speculaas, and what sets it apart from other spice cookies, is the unique mix of spices called spekulaaskruiden. This mix is a rich blend of spices containing cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, cardamom, ginger, white pepper, coriander and sometimes anise, fennel, mace, and allspice. (You'll find many recipes for speculaas that call for pumpkin pie spice instead of the spekulaaskruiden but be warned there is a big difference and you won't get the same result!) In order to get the maximum flavour and aroma, it is best to start with whole spices and freshly grind them, but you can also use pre-ground spices. The cookies are traditionally shaped in a wooden mold (speculaasplank) with shapes of windmills or with scenes depicting the story of Sinterklaas. The same dough can also be shaped into small round crunchy cookies called Kruidnoten ("spice nuts"), or into other shapes if you don't have a speculaasplank.



Ingredients

FOR THE SPICE MIX

- 16 g ceylon cinnamon
- 4 g cloves
- 4 g nutmeg
- 2 g star anise
- 2 g white pepper
- 2 g ginger powder
- 2 g coriander
- 1 g green cardamom
- 1 g mace
- 1 g fennel seed
- 1 g allspice

FOR THE DOUGH

- 1 ¾ cup Anita's Organic All Purpose Flour
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter (room temperature)
- 2/3 cup dark brown/demerara sugar
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 2 tbsp buttermilk
- 1/2 tsp fine sea salt
- 4 tsp spice mixture

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Instructions

1. In a spice grinder, finely grind all of the spices and then sift.
2. Cream the butter and sugar for 2-3 minutes in a stand mixer with the paddle attachment or with a hand mixer in a medium bowl.
3. Add the buttermilk and mix until fully incorporated.
4. Sift together the flour, baking powder, soda, salt and spice mixture.
5. Add the flour mixture to the bowl and mix just until fully incorporated.
6. Refrigerate the dough for at least 30 minutes. Refrigerating the dough overnight will allow the spices more time to permeate the dough.

FOR SPEKULAAS IN A SPECULAASPLANK

7. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
8. Dust the mold with rice flour.
9. Press a thin layer of dough into the mold.
10. Using a sharp knife carefully cut the dough level with the top of the mold. It helps to keep some pressure on the dough ahead of the knife to keep the dough from being pulled from the mold.
11. Knock the dough out onto a parchment-lined cookie sheet. If your mold is new, expect that the first few cookies might not come free very easily!
12. Bake for 12-15 minutes, until the colour just begins to darken.
13. Cool on the cookie sheet for 2-3 minutes and then transfer to a wire rack.

SPECULAAS WITHOUT A MOLD

14. Roll the dough to ¼".
15. Using a cookie cutter or a knife, cut cookies into desired shapes.
16. Optionally you can roll sugar into the tops, or brush with egg white and press sliced almonds into the tops.