

SPICE BISCUITS + BOOZE

This classic butter biscuit recipe is made very special - and rather Christmassy! - by making a festive spice mix to stir through the mixture. The spice can also be added to preserves such as apricot or plum jam, or ham glazes. It can even be infused into spirits such as gin, vodka or rum - Christmas cocktails, here we come!

The biscuit mixture can be frozen and sliced to bake. You can also have fun rolling this mixture with a 'springerle' rolling pin with carved designs, or use cookie cutters to make fun shapes.



Makes: about 30

Time: 1 hour, including 30 minutes resting time



INGREDIENTS

Festive spice mix

- 1 stick cinnamon
- 4 cloves
- 2 pimento or allspice, optional
- 4 peppercorns
- 3 cardamom pods, seeds only
- ¼ nutmeg
- 20 grams (0.7 oz) white sugar
- 2 tsp ground ginger

Biscuits

- 175 grams (6 oz) raw sugar
- 220 grams (7.5 oz) unsalted butter, cubed and softened
- 1 egg
- 4 tsp Spice Mix (or use 2 tsp ground cinnamon, 1 tsp ground allspice, pinch nutmeg)
- pinch fine salt
- 400 grams (14 oz) plain flour



METHOD

Festive spice mix

1. Place all Spice Mix ingredients in mixing bowl and mill **40 sec/speed 10** or until finely ground. Store in an airtight container. If continuing with biscuits there's no need to wash the bowl.

Biscuits

2. Place sugar in mixing bowl and mill **6 sec/speed 10**.
3. Add butter and mix **30 sec/speed 5**.
4. Add egg, spice (4 tsp, or to taste) and salt. Mix **20 sec/speed 5**.
5. Add flour and mix **20 sec/speed 5**. Scrape down and mix **10 sec/speed 5**.
6. Remove dough from mixing bowl and form into a flattened brick. Wrap and place in refrigerator for 30 minutes.
7. When ready to bake, preheat oven to 200°C / 400°F and line a baking tray with baking paper. Flour rolling surface and rolling pin. Roll dough to about 5mm (0.2 in) thickness, flouring as you go, before cutting into shapes or embossing with designs.
8. Place in oven (200°C / 400°F) and bake for 10 to 12 minutes or until golden. Remove from oven and cool before moving. Store in an airtight container.



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Tips

- If you haven't got around to softening your butter, simply scrape and mix a little longer at step 3.
- Don't stint on the flour used when rolling out this very buttery mixture!
- Springerle rolling pins and moulds are used for German (and other European) holiday baking. They are available from specialist kitchen stores and online, such as at Etsy.
- Form unused cookie dough into a roll, wrap tightly and store in the freezer. Defrost until easy to slice, then bake from frozen.

Variations

- Use your spice mix to infuse spirits. Add 2 tsp for every 300 ml (10 oz) alcohol. Shake to mix. Leave for at least 3 days and invert the bottle to mix the spices through every couple of days. Use spirit in your favourite cocktails or serve over ice for the full spice experience.
- Spice mix can also be added to sweet pastry, eg for lemon tarts, fruit preserves or poaching, ice cream mixtures, or added to marinades and a ham glaze.

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Makes: about 30



SHOPPING LIST:

- Cinnamon (1 stick)
- Cloves (4)
- Pimento or allspice, optional (2)
- Peppercorns (4)
- Cardamom pods (3)
- Nutmeg (¼)
- White sugar (20 grams / 0.7 oz)
- Ground ginger (2 tsp)
- Raw sugar (175 grams / 6 oz)
- Unsalted butter (220 grams / 7.5 oz)
- Egg (1)
- Salt
- Plain flour (400 grams / 14 oz)



SHOPPING LIST: