



Polvorones de Nuez (Mexican Pecan Cookies)

This recipe is courtesy of Evangelina (Vangie) Henry of rural Solomon, Kansas. Her tia (aunt), Esperanza Zardenetta, made them the traditional way with lard and never added the pecans. **Yield: 30 small balls**

Ingredients

- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, or use shortening or pork lard
- ¼ cup powdered sugar
- Heaping ¼ teaspoon crushed anise seeds
- Heaping ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups all purpose flour
- 1½ cups finely crushed pecans, optional
- **Topping:** ¾ cup fine sugar (purchased or made by adding granulated sugar to a blender and pulsing just a couple of times) mixed with 1½ teaspoons ground cinnamon, or use powdered sugar

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 375°. Line cookie sheet with parchment paper.
2. In a mixing bowl, cream the butter; then add powdered sugar, anise, cinnamon, salt and vanilla. Mix until smooth and creamy.
3. Gradually mix in the flour until dough forms. Add pecans now if using. If dough is sticky, mix in a little more flour, about 2 tablespoons at a time.
4. Roll 30 small or 15 medium dough balls and place on prepared cookie sheet. They won't spread so may be placed close together, but not touching.
5. Bake in preheated oven for 13 to 14 minutes, turning pan halfway through the baking time to help cookies bake more evenly.
6. Gently dredge the cookies in the cinnamon-sugar while they are still slightly warm. Or, sift powdered sugar over cookies once they have cooled.
7. Let cool completely before storing in an airtight container.

Pan de Polvo (Cinnamon Sugar Cookies)

This is a family recipe passed down to Sally Sanchez from her mother. Sanchez's family prefers to roll the dough and cut it with star- and heart-shaped cutters. However, the dough can also be rolled into logs and sliced into rounds. **Yield: Approximately 5 dozen small cookies**

Ingredients

Cinnamon-Anise "Tea"

- 3 cinnamon sticks (each approximately 2½-inches long)
- 2 tablespoons anise seeds
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup water

Cookie Dough

- 4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1¼ cups vegetable shortening

Cinnamon-Sugar Mixture

- 1½ cups granulated sugar
- 2 tablespoons ground cinnamon

Instructions

1. Cinnamon-Anise "Tea": Combine cinnamon sticks, anise seed and ¼ cup sugar with water in a small saucepan; boil for approximately 4 minutes. Remove from heat and strain; discard spices.
2. Preheat oven to 375°F. Grease or spray cookie sheets with pan release, or line sheets with sprayed parchment paper.
3. Cookie Dough: Add flour and shortening to a mixing bowl. Use a mixer or pastry blender to cut-in/mix the dough until it resembles coarse meal. Slowly add the warm "tea," stirring it into the flour in ¼-cup intervals, adding as much as is needed until the dough begins to form a ball. Knead dough until it's soft and smooth, not sticky to the touch—about 5 minutes.
4. Choose one method. Either: 1) roll out the dough on a lightly floured surface to about ¼-inch thick; cut dough with cookie cutters of your choice. Or 2) roll the dough into 1-inch diameter logs and then slice logs into ¼-inch-thick rounds.
5. Place cookies close together (but not touching) on prepared cookie sheet. Without leavening, they spread very little or not at all.
6. Bake in preheated oven for 15 to 20 minutes or until golden brown. To check for doneness, cut a cookie in half—it should crumble.
7. Cinnamon-Sugar Mixture: As cookies bake, combine the cinnamon and sugar in a container.
8. Once cookies are out of the oven, immediately add them to the container of cinnamon and sugar—the heat will cause the mixture to adhere.
9. Dust off excess sugar and allow cookies to cool. Store cooled cookies in a container with a tight lid.