

## **Biscochitos (New Mexico's official state cookie)**

Servings: 4 dozen cookies

### **Ingredients**

3 cups unbleached all-purpose flour

1½ teaspoons baking powder

1 to 1½ teaspoons ground anise (best if freshly ground)

½ teaspoon salt

½ pound lard, softened (key ingredient; do NOT substitute)

½ cup plus 1 tablespoon sugar

1 large egg

2 tablespoons brandy (can substitute: sweet white wine, rum, apple or pineapple juice)

¼ cup sugar and ¾ teaspoon ground cinnamon for the topping

### **Directions**

Sift together the flour, baking powder, anise, and salt and set aside.

Beat the lard in an electric mixer, gradually adding the sugar, and beat until extremely fluffy and light, about 8 minutes. Don't shortcut this step. Stop the mixer every couple of minutes and scrape the sides of the mixing bowl.

Add the egg, followed by the wine, and continue beating.

Mix in the dry ingredients, adding about one-third of the mixture at a time. Stop the mixer as you make each addition, and beat no longer than necessary to incorporate the dry ingredients. A stiff pie-crust type of dough is what you're seeking.

Chill the dough for about 15 minutes for easy handling.

Preheat the oven to 350.

Roll out the dough ¼-inch thick on a floured work surface and cut with a paring knife into a fleur-de-lis, or cut with a small cookie cutter. Avoid handling the dough any more than necessary, one of the keys to the melt-in-your-mouth texture.

Transfer the cookies to ungreased cookie sheets.

Bake the cookies for 10 to 12 minutes, until just set and pale golden.

While the cookies bake, stir together the topping.

When the cookies are done, cool for just a minute or two on the baking sheets, then gently dunk the top of each in the cinnamon sugar.

Transfer to absorbent paper to finish cooling.

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