

Koulourakia (Greek Easter Cookies)

Poetry & Pies

prep time: 20-25 minutes

bake time: 15-20 minutes

total time: 45 minutes

yields: 75-100 cookies (they'll last 1-2 weeks in an airtight container)



Ingredients

- 1 cup (227g) unsalted butter, melted*
- 1 ½ cups (300g) granulated sugar
- 4 eggs, room temperature
- ¼ cup (62g) orange juice (fresh or store bought)
- ½ teaspoon (3g) baking soda
- finely grated zest of one large orange (about ½ tablespoon)
- 7 ½ teaspoons (30g) baking powder
- 1 tablespoon (13g) vanilla extract
- 1 shot (42g) Greek mastikha/mastika/mastiha liqueur (optional--and spelling seems to vary widely)**
- 1 shot (42g) bourbon
- ¼ teaspoon (1g) cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon (1g) nutmeg
- 5-7 cups (680-952g) flour
- 2 tablespoons (26g) vegetable oil ([Wesson](#) is recommended)
- 3 ounces (85g) [sesame seeds](#) (or as needed)

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 325 for convection, 350 for a regular oven.
2. In the bowl of your stand mixer with the paddle attachment, beat the butter and sugar on high until light and fluffy, about 2-3 minutes.

3. Add eggs and beat until light and fluffy, about 1-2 minutes.
4. Mix orange juice with the baking soda and whisk until done fizzing (the foam will still sit on top a bit). Add this along with the zest to the bowl and mix until well-blended. It may look separated, but don't worry.
5. Add each of the remaining ingredients except flour and oil (so baking powder through nutmeg), adding each ingredient one at a time with the mixer on medium and mixing well after each addition, about 30 seconds between.
6. Begin adding the flour, about $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup at a time, adding more flour with the mixer on (use that splash shield here!). As soon as one scoop is incorporated, dump another scoop in. About halfway through the flour, you'll need to switch to the dough hook attachment. At this time, you will also start adding splashes of the oil after each addition of flour has mixed in. The goal is to use up all the oil by the time all of the flour is added.
7. Since flour brands and climate drastically affect doughs, you'll need to gauge how much flour you need by how the dough is coming together. It should start pulling away from the sides of the bowl but still be somewhat light and airy. If you pinch a piece off, it should be able to be rolled (gently) into a somewhat smooth rope and hold its shape and not stick to your hands.
8. Once the dough is ready, roll out your cookies. On a [silicone baking mat](#) or another similar smooth, nonstick surface (not parchment--a smooth cutting board works), take a piece of dough about 2 tablespoons or so large (ping pong ball sized is what I go with). Gently roll it out into a long, thin rope about 6" to 8" long. This requires a bit of a swift, rocking motion with your fingers. Don't press down, but rather roll your hands out and away from each other to stretch it out without pushing it down. Don't worry if your first few aren't pretty--they'll still taste good!
9. Pour a small bit of sesame seeds out in a line parallel to the rope. Gently roll your rope across the sesame seeds (again, don't press it down or it'll lose its shape).
10. Take one end of the rope and cross it over the other to make an oblong loop with the crossing part near the ends. Take the top of the loop (opposite of where the crossed pieces are) and gently yet swiftly twist it once to create a twist in the middle of your oblong loop then one last time to finish off the twists at the top. See pictures for an example of this. If desired, cut the ends of to get a clean cookie (and return them to the bowl of dough).

11. Depending on the size you make your cookies (about 3" is usually good), you should be able to fit about 18-20 cookies on a large, [nonstick cookie sheet](#). They will about double in size as they bake, so leave about 1-2 inches between cookies.
12. Bake for 15-20 minutes, until just golden brown. This is often a persona preference, depending how crisp or crumbly you like your cookies. They go great with coffee and milk, so if they get crisper than you wanted, just dunk away!
13. Let cool on the pan 5 minutes then transfer to a [wire rack](#) to cool completely (if needed--they cool quickly).

Enjoy!

Cookies will last in an airtight container for at least a week, sometimes two.

**European butter is best! It has less water and makes a better cookie, in my opinion.*

***If you don't have a Greek store in your area, beverage stores like BevMo and Total Wine tend to carry this, as well as Cost Plus, World Market. If you cannot find it, you can double the bourbon instead.*