

LARIAN PRESENTS: HANA KÁBLÍK KORPASOVÁ'S GINGERBREAD HAN(A)

INGREDIENTS

400g flour
120g sugar
160g honey
60g butter
2 eggs
½ tsp baking soda
2 tsps gingerbread spice

For the flour, the type varies all around the world, but just use one of the more finely milled kinds and you should be fine.

For the sugar, again use something fine. Icing sugar or similar.

The Gingerbread spice is the biggest variable and will differ from country to country. This recipe uses a spice containing fennel, coriander, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, anise, orange peel, allspice and star anise.

Mix the ingredients thoroughly, be sure to sift the flour and sugar first. Temperature matters, the warmer the dough, the stickier it is. You can help reduce its temperature by adding the butter right from the fridge – just grate it on a grater like cheese, that way it's easy to knead into the dough.

Don't be alarmed if the dough feels very sticky anyway, it's supposed to be that way at this stage. If it sticks TOO much (if you can't lift it off the table without half of it sticking to it), add some flour. I usually have to add some, but it depends on your ingredients (how big the eggs are, how dry the flour is...).

I like to finish kneading the dough by tossing it from hand to hand with force, that way it cannot stick to the table and I don't have to add so much flour. It also removes most of the excess dough off my fingers and palms.



Of course you can use an electric mixer, I just like to make the dough for all my Christmas sweets by hand. Makes it more personal and also gives you a lot of extra info on how dry/wet/sticky/smooth/chunky the dough is.



The resulting dough should be smooth on the surface (with no chunks and a uniform color), but hard to handle due to stickiness. When it's properly mixed, put it in a plastic bag/food wrap and let it sit in the fridge overnight. Don't skip this part, it has a great impact on the result. Some people let the dough "rest" for several days even.



On the next day, preheat the oven to 150°C (302 Fahrenheit), cover your baking trays in baking paper and sprinkle a generous amount of flour on your table. Prepare some egg wash as well (1 egg + 1 tablespoon of water or milk, mix thoroughly with a fork).

Put the dough table and sprinkle some more flour on the top as well (the dough might smell funny, that's because of the soda, don't worry about it – the smell should disappear when baking).

Roll it out evenly (add flour if it starts to stick) until it's about 2mm thick (or thicker – they do puff up in the oven, but some people like them even thicker). Cut out various shapes - gather all the cookie cutters you can, the more shapes the merrier.

After you transfer them onto the baking trays, brush them with egg wash to add some shine. If you want to decorate them with almonds or almond slices, now's the right time, they stick to the egg wash nicely. (If you skipped almonds, you can also use the egg wash right after baking instead of before, while the cookies are still hot.)

You can gather the excess dough, knead it a bit and roll it out again, the cookies should be fine. Don't repeat it more than once or twice though, every time you roll the dough out it absorbs more flour.

Now, the recipe says "bake until they get brown", which can be confusing - depending on the spices used the dough can already be quite brown. So just wait for the color to change to a nice warm golden brown and don't let it get dark brown. It usually takes me about 15-17 minutes in my oven, but that's just approximate and depends on the oven and the thickness of the cookies.

(If you stick to cookies as big and thick as mine in the pictures, you should end up with around 100 of them from the ingredients listed above. What you see in the picture is somewhere around 260 cookies.)

If you chose to skip the almonds, you can use the icing recipe below and decorate with that.

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Beat 1 egg white, 150 – 200g icing sugar and 1 teaspoon lemonjuice until the icing is reeeally thick (if you make a small dot, it should hold shape). The amount of sugar varies greatly depending on the egg white size, just experiment – add sugar to make it thicker, add lemon juice to make it thinner. Put into an appropriate piping bag with a small tip (or just a plastic bag, just cut a tiny hole in it by cutting the corner off) and have fun decorating.

