Soft Lebkuchen for Advent

Prep 30 min **Cook** 25 min **Chill** 2 hr **Total** 2 hr 55 min **Makes** About 30 cookies **Level** Easy

ADULT SUPERVISION REQUIRED

Cooking is for children and grown-ups together. An adult should supervise at all times and handle the oven, stovetop, knives, and anything hot. Warm honey syrup can burn, so a grown-up handles the stovetop and the pouring. Honey is never for babies under 12 months, even baked into cookies. Metal cookie cutters can have a sharp edge: children press on the rolled top edge.

ALLERGY INFORMATION

Contains wheat (gluten), milk (butter), egg, and tree nuts (almond flour; use more all-purpose flour for a nut-free batch). Chocolate usually contains milk and soy. Contains honey. Always read ingredient labels, since brands vary, and ask about food allergies before you cook or share.

INGREDIENTS

Cookies

- ¾ cup (255 g) honey
- ½ cup (100 g) packed dark brown sugar
- 2 tbsp (30 g) butter
- 1 egg
- 1 tbsp lemon juice and 1 tsp grated lemon or orange zest
- 2¾ cups (345 g) all-purpose flour
- ½ cup (50 g) almond flour (or ¼ cup / 30 g more all-purpose flour)
- ¾ tsp baking soda
- 1 tbsp Lebkuchen spice, or 2 tsp cinnamon plus ½ tsp each ground ginger, cloves, allspice, and nutmeg
- ¼ tsp salt

Glaze (choose one)

- 1 cup (120 g) powdered sugar stirred with 2 tbsp hot water or lemon juice
- 4 oz (115 g) semisweet or dark chocolate, melted

METHOD

1. In a saucepan over low heat, warm the honey, brown sugar, and butter, stirring, just until the butter melts and the sugar dissolves. Do not let it boil. Pour into a large bowl and cool for 15 minutes, until just warm.
2. Beat in the egg, lemon juice, and zest.
3. In another bowl, whisk the flour, almond flour, baking soda, spice, and salt. Stir them into the honey mixture to make a soft, sticky dough. Cover and chill for at least 2 hours, or up to 2 days.
4. Heat the oven to 350°F (175°C) and line two baking sheets with parchment. On a well-floured surface, roll the dough ¼ inch (6 mm) thick and cut 2½-inch (6 cm) rounds, hearts, or stars. Set them 1 inch (2.5 cm) apart.
5. Bake one sheet at a time for 10 to 12 minutes, until puffed and the tops spring back when touched lightly. Do not overbake: they firm up as they cool.
6. For a white glaze, stir the powdered sugar and hot water until smooth and thin, and brush it over the cookies while they are still warm. For chocolate, let the cookies cool completely, then dip the tops in the melted chocolate.
7. Let the glaze set for 30 minutes, then store the cookies in an airtight tin. They grow softer and spicier after a day or two.

LITTLE HELPERS CAN (WITH A GROWN-UP)

- Whisk the spices into the flour, smelling each one first
- Cut out rounds, hearts, and stars
- Brush on the white glaze or dip the tops in chocolate
- Fill a tin to give to a neighbor during Advent

GOOD TO KNOW

- Put a slice of apple in the tin and change it every few days. The cookies soak up its moisture and stay soft for 2 to 3 weeks.
- Lebkuchen spice (Lebkuchengewürz) is sold in German shops and online. A pinch of ground cardamom, anise, or coriander makes the homemade mix taste even more traditional.

A BLESSING BEFORE WE EAT

Bless us, O Lord, and these thy gifts, which we are about to receive from thy bounty, through Christ our Lord. Amen. Saint Boniface, pray for us, and help us share the good news of Jesus as we wait for Christmas.