ST. NICHOLAS DAY · DECEMBER 6

St. Nicholas pepernoten

Prep 30 min **Cook** 15 min **Chill** 30 min **Total** 1 hr 15 min **Makes** About 100 tiny cookies (12 handfuls)

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. Pepernoten are small, round, and hard, which makes them a choking hazard for children under 4. Break them into pieces or give toddlers something soft instead.

ALLERGY INFORMATION

Contains wheat (gluten) and milk. Chocolate for dipping usually contains milk and soy. Always read ingredient labels, since brands vary, and ask about food allergies before you cook or share.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups (250 g) all-purpose flour
- 1½ tsp baking powder
- 1 tbsp speculaas spice, or 2 tsp cinnamon plus ¼ tsp each nutmeg, ginger, and ground cloves and a pinch of ground anise
- ¼ tsp salt
- 7 tbsp (100 g) butter, softened
- ⅔ cup (135 g) packed dark brown sugar
- 3 to 4 tbsp milk

METHOD

1. Whisk the flour, baking powder, spice, and salt together in a bowl.
2. In a larger bowl, beat the butter and brown sugar until smooth. Add the flour mixture and 3 tablespoons of milk and mix, then knead briefly with your hands into a smooth, firm dough. Add a little more milk only if it is crumbly.
3. Wrap the dough and chill it for 30 minutes (or up to 2 days) so it is easy to roll.
4. Heat the oven to 350°F (175°C) and line two baking sheets with parchment paper.
5. Roll the dough into balls the size of a marble, about ¾ inch (2 cm) across, and set them about 1 inch (2.5 cm) apart on the sheets. They spread only a little.
6. Bake 12 to 15 minutes, until firm and browned on the bottom. Let them cool on the sheets; they turn crunchy as they cool.

LITTLE HELPERS CAN (WITH A GROWN-UP)

- Whisk the spices into the flour and smell them
- Roll the dough into tiny marbles, counting by tens
- Fill little bags of pepernoten to give away
- Set out shoes by the door on the eve of the feast

GOOD TO KNOW

- Pepernoten keep for 3 weeks in an airtight tin. If they are still soft in the middle once cool, or soften later, crisp them in a 300°F (150°C) oven for 5 minutes.
- For chocolate pepernoten, dip the cooled cookies halfway in melted chocolate and let them set on parchment paper.

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 Nicholas, pray for us, and help us share what we have with open hands.