

To make bisket bread stiff

Cookies with coriander and aniseed

Mari Voipio

These Renaissance cookies were served at the dessert table of the Renaissance Ball on Thursday evening. The term *bisket*, later spelled as *biscuit*, is at least as old as this recipe and originally meant 'twice baked'. This is exactly what is done to these cookies: first they are baked, then sliced and dried in the warm oven. Because they are dry and virtually fat free (except for egg yolk), the biskets keep for a long time as long as they are kept dry.

As no raising agents are used, whip your eggs really well and try to fold in the egg whites with a minimum of agitation to keep some of the air in. Whipping the eggs and mixing the dough is the most work-intensive part of the baking process, but once you get that done, no rolling or other fiddly work is involved.

If you want to experiment a bit, the taste of the cookies is slightly different if you substitute some of the flour with whole wheat flour (graham flour) or if you use spelt flour instead of standard wheat. Instead of white sugar you can use cane sugar or even brown sugar. As the term *bisket* indicates, these cookies are not that sweet, so you can increase the amount of sugar a bit if desired.

This recipe makes 30-40 cookies, depending on how wide you slice them and how much your dough flattens in the oven.

Ingredients

- 300 grams wheat flour (appr. 5 dl)
- 150 grams sugar (appr. 2 dl)
- 3 egg whites
- 2 whole eggs
- 1.5 tablespoons ground aniseed (2 tblsp before grinding)
- 1 tablespoons ground coriander (1.5 tblsp of seeds)

Preparation

- Turn on the oven at 180°C and line a baking sheet with paper.
- Separate the egg whites, there should not be any yolk in the whites.
- Grind the aniseed (and coriander if needed). Measure the flour and mix the ground spices in.
- In a clean and dry bowl, whip the whole eggs and sugar until so fluffy that you can draw a figure 8 on top. Mix in the flour mixture, don't agitate more than necessary.
- In a separate clean and dry bowl, whip the egg whites so stiff that you can turn the bowl upside down without the whites falling out.
- Carefully fold the whites into the dough, mix as little as possible. The dough should be fairly stiff at this point.
- Spoon the dough into approximately 3cm wide lengths onto the baking sheet. It doesn't matter if the lengths are slightly bumpy, but if the dough spreads a lot, you need to add flour to it.
- As soon as possible, move the lengths onto a cutting board and slice them into 1cm wide slices. Spread the sliced cookies onto a baking sheet and return it to the still warm oven to dry the biskets.
- When the biskets are completely dry, store them dry and cool e.g. in a tin or jar.

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