



ZIMTSTERNE

Makes around 60 small stars (4cm diameter) or 50 big ones (5cm diameter)

*** TIP: the dough for these little cookies tends to get really sticky, so make sure to dust your work surface with plenty of icing sugar and moisten your rolling pin and cookie cutter with a bit water (not too much though or you'll make the dough even stickier) - this will make working the dough a bit easier... ***

These are best made 2 days before eating, since they will soften with time

3 egg whites
300g icing sugar
1 tbsp lemon juice
400g ground almonds
3 tbsp cinnamon
1 tsp spekulatius spice (optional)
1/2 apple (for storing)

- Preheat the oven to 180° celsius fan.
- In a bowl, whisk the egg whites until stiff, then gradually add the icing sugar. Beat another minute until you have a glossy egg white mix.
- Add the lemon juice and beat once more.
- Take out 7 tbsp of the egg white mix and set aside - you're going to use this as the frosting later.
- Now, add the ground almonds and spices to the egg mix, and incorporate with an electric hand whisk. Then, use your hands and knead the mix to a workable dough. If the dough is too brittle, add a tiny bit of water, but make sure the dough doesn't become wet. It should just easily hold together, so that you can roll it out without a problem.
- Put the dough on a silicone mat, or on a surface that you've dusted with icing sugar (so that the dough doesn't stick). Moisten your rolling pin with water (a non-stick trick) and roll out until the dough is about the thickness of a pound coin.
- Cut out stars, and regularly dip the cookie cutter into water before cutting out the stars, so that the stars come off without sticking to the cutter.
- Arrange the stars on a baking tray lined with baking paper. Then, using a knife, spread some of the frosting onto each star. If you want to make sure that the star tips are covered in icing, it's best to start spreading the frosting from the middle, then pulling the flattened knife out in the middle between two star tips - like that the knife will cover half of each star tip, and if you repeat the process it will cover everything pretty evenly. Don't fret about this though, the stars are supposed to look rustic, so an uneven frosting is no biggie.
- Bake the stars for 12 minutes until the frosting becomes slightly golden.
- Put onto a wire rack and let the stars cool down.
- Once cool, put the Zimtsterne into a tin and lay the apple half on top - the moisture in the apple will make the cookies chewy. Take out the apple after 2 days. These cookies will then keep in a tin for about 2 weeks.