



Pierniczki

(Polish Gingerbread Cookies)

Pierniczki are Polish gingerbread cookies.

The Polish city of Toruń, like Nuremberg, Germany, has been famous for its gingerbread cookies and cakes since the Middle Ages. The cookies were originally baked in intricately carved wooden molds but today are more often cut into rounds or the shapes of St. Nicholas, hearts and other fanciful designs.

GINGERBREAD INGREDIENTS

- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ginger
- ½ teaspoon cloves
- 1 teaspoon baking soda dissolved in 3 Tablespoons of water
- 1 cup honey
- 3 cups all-purpose flour

ROYAL ICING INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound sifted powdered sugar
- ½ cup room temperature egg whites (2 large room-temperature egg whites)
- ½ teaspoon cream of tatar

PREPARATION

1. In a large bowl, beat eggs with sugar until light and lemon-colored. Add the spices, baking soda-water mixture and honey. Mix well. Add flour gradually and mix until a stiff dough forms. Shape into a ball, wrap in plastic and let it rest for 30 minutes.
2. Heat oven to 400 degrees. On parchment paper cut to fit your baking pans, roll the dough to 1/4-inch thickness. Cut into your desired shape. Lift the parchment paper by opposite corners and place on the baking pans.
3. Bake for 10 minutes or until lightly brown around the edges. Let cool completely before storing in an airtight container. It's best to ice or glaze these cookies right before serving.

ROYAL ICING:

1. Place 1 pound sifted confectioners' sugar (or more as needed), 1/2 cup room-temperature pasteurized egg whites (or 3 large room-temperature pasteurized egg whites) and 1/2 teaspoon cream of tartar in a large mixing bowl and combine. Scrape down sides.
2. Turn the mixer to high and beat until thick and very white. The mixture will hold a peak. This should take at least 7 to 10 minutes.
3. When finished, cover with plastic wrap, making sure it touches the royal icing so a crust doesn't form. Royal icing dries out quickly, so make sure it is covered all the time. Otherwise, there will be lumps in the icing and they will never pass through an icing tip.

Note: This recipe delivers PERFECT royal icing EVERY TIME. If, after beating 7 to 10 minutes, the icing appears too soupy, add more powdered sugar and keep on whipping, but be careful not to add too much or the icing will be dry and hard to work with.