

Koulourakia - Κουλουράκια (koulourakia)



Butter cookies, often shaped into twists or rings, and flavored with vanilla or citrus zest.

SERVES	PREP	COOK	TOTAL	CUISINE
About 30 biscuits	25 minutes	15 minutes	40 minutes	Greek

Ingredients

- 250 g (9 oz) unsalted butter, softened
- 200 g (7 oz) caster sugar
- 2 large eggs, at room temperature
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 orange, finely grated zest only
- 60 ml (2 fl oz) milk, at room temperature
- 500 g (1 lb 2 oz) plain flour, plus extra for dusting
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp fine sea salt
- 1 egg yolk, beaten with 1 tbsp milk, for glazing
- 1 tbsp sesame seeds, optional



Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C fan (200°C/392°F/Gas 6) and line two baking trays with baking paper.
2. In a large bowl, beat the softened butter and sugar together on medium speed, or by hand with a wooden spoon, for 3-4 minutes until pale, light and creamy.
3. Beat in the eggs one at a time, mixing well after each addition until the mixture is smooth and emulsified, then stir in the vanilla extract and orange zest.
4. Add the milk and mix briefly until incorporated.
5. In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder and salt to distribute the leavening evenly.
6. Add the dry ingredients to the butter mixture in two or three additions, mixing gently until a soft, pliable dough forms and no dry flour remains; do not overwork.
7. Turn the dough onto a lightly floured surface and knead very briefly, just until smooth. If it feels sticky, dust with a little more flour, but keep the dough soft.
8. Divide the dough into walnut-sized pieces and roll each piece into a rope about 12-15 cm (5-6 in) long. Shape into twists, braids or rings, pressing the ends together neatly if needed.
9. Arrange the biscuits on the prepared trays, leaving a little space between them. Brush lightly with the egg yolk glaze and sprinkle with sesame seeds, if using.
10. Bake on the middle shelves for 12-15 minutes, until the biscuits are lightly golden on the edges and just set on top. They should remain pale rather than deeply coloured.
11. Leave to cool on the trays for 5 minutes to firm up, then transfer to a wire rack and cool completely.

To serve

Serve the koulourakia alongside Greek coffee, mountain tea or milk, arranged in a bowl or on a platter. They are lovely plain, though a little extra orange zest over the top after baking makes them especially fragrant.

