

Speculaas

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Speculaas

I have taken over this recipe from a bakery near Brussels where I have been helping for a while in my free time.

For this recipe I use ingredients available in Belgium, the dark brown sugar is sugar mixed with syrup, no dry dark brown sugar.

For the spices I use the brand POLAK, this is a spice factory in the Netherlands. Unfortunately I do not know the proportions of these spices.

In the recipe I give as an example the mix used by the bakery DANDOY from Brussels (<https://maisondandoy.com/>), a famous speculaas bakery.

his mixture is specifically for Brussels speculaas, in other countries and regions other spices (like anise that we do not use) are added or omitted, this is a matter of taste.

As an example I made a dough with a stand mixer, you can also make this dough by hand, it is the same method, but it is more difficult when mixing the flour.

Never be tempted to add more water! .

I personally have a professional kitchen robot, my experience with a Kitchenaid is as follows:

Use only half of the recipe, otherwise it will be too much for a Kitchenaid.

I would recommend using the flat mixing hook instead of the hook as it will not mix properly, the hook pushes the ingredients to the side instead of mixing.

When mixing occasionally stop and turn the dough once, experience has shown that dry ingredients remain on the bottom of the mixing bowl and the dough is not mixed properly.

The dough must be very smooth and elastic, if necessary you can continue kneading by hand.

In my recipe I give the ingredients with the European units of measure, in grams and kilos.

It is very difficult to do the conversion with the American units of measurement because they are based on volume. the weighing of the ingredients is always correct and almost every scale also has the units of measurement in grams and kilos.

If the recipe speaks of a teaspoon, it is not an American size but a real teaspoon.



Ingredients

for a dough of 4,41 lbs (2 kg) speculaas

1 kg of TIPO 00 flour - 650 gr of brown sugar - 350 gr of butter - 100 ml of water - 1 egg - 12.5 gr of speculoos spices - 12.5 gr of cinnamon - 3.5 gr of alkali (Hartshorn/Bakers Amonia) - 8,5 gr of baking soda - 1 tsp of pure cocoa powder

Flour: I recommend using Italian flower TIPO 00 in the US, this is the equivalent of type 45 in France.

Brown sugar: I use either Belgian brown sugar from the brand COUPLET SUGARS (www.coupletsugars.com) or brown sugar from the company Lebbe Sugars.

Spices of speculoos: For the dough of speculaas I use a mixture of spices and cinnamon of the brand J.S.POLAK. this is a Dutch company (<https://www.polak.nl/welcome/index.html>)

You can also compose the spice mixture yourself according to your personal taste.

example recipe from the speculaas bakery DANDOY in Brussels: :
take 25 gr of the following mixture: instead of the mix indicated in the list of the ingredients above

3 1/2 tablespoons. cinnamon, 1 teaspoon nutmeg,
1 tablespoon clove, 2 teaspoons ginger,
1 teaspoon white pepper





Ingredients

*Alkali : Hartshorn/Bakers Amonia
ammonium carbonate acid*

*It makes the speculoos more crunchy under the tooth.
Excessive use can make the relief of the drawing more blurry!
(same for baking soda) This baking powder is optional,
you can replace it with 3.5 gr of baking soda.*

Pure cocoa powder:

*brings a chocolate hue, it is optional and
according to your personal taste. It also helps
to neutralize the taste of baking soda
(acid regulator)*



The speculaas dough

The example shows us the dough made with a stand mixer

Maximum speed used to knead = 90 rpm

On the occasion, scratch the walls of the bowl to ensure that everything is well incorporated



Mix the dry ingredients in the bowl, the brown sugar, the spices of speculaas, the cinnamon, the cocoa, the bicarbonate of soda and the alkali. (Take care to sift the baking soda, alkali and cocoa)

Add the butter (at room temperature) and knead until a smooth cream



Add the egg and water and knead until the ingredients are well mixed.

Sift and then add all the flour to the cream. Knead at low speed until a thick dough is removed from the wall of the bowl.

However, do not knead too long, stop as soon as the flour is absorbed.



The speculaas dough



Compact the dough, previously wrapped in a food film, by gently tapping on the work surface. Let the dough rest in the fridge for at least 24 hours. It can be kept for at least two weeks in the refrigerator.



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The mold: it is advisable to oil a new mold several times with vegetable oil or mineral food oil until saturation of the wood. For old molds just make regularly an maintenance.



I advise against oiling the mold just before use, so to avoid that the rice semolina remains stuck in the carved details. It is best to dab the surface of the board with a piece of dough to grease lightly.



Stamping: Take the dough out of the fridge. Before use, slightly knead the dough to obtain an elastic dough.

Not too long to avoid the dough becomes too soft. Before stamping the speculaas put rice semolina on the mold, then remove the surplus (Personally I tap on the bottom of the mold with a rolling pin).

Stamp the speculaas dough all over the surface of the mold.



After stamping pass on the dough with a rolling pin to perfectly match the drawing.

Remove the excess dough with a large knife or with a thin wire. If you use a knife, put your hand on the dough and follow the path of the knife to prevent the dough from go up.

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Some tips:

*Clean the knife regularly so that the dough does not stick to it.
Take a sharp knife.*

Avoid that the dough becomes too soft.

Due to reusing surpluses of the dough it risks to becoming too soft, put the dough back (wrapped in a food film) in the refrigerator and let rest for a moment.



*The demolding: after stamping you must unmold the dough.
Flip the mold and hit it against a surface to take out the subject.*

For large subjects it is advisable to demould on top of parchment paper to facilitate transfer to the baking tray.

When the subject breaks after demolding you can put together the different pieces on the baking tray.

During cooking they will weld together.

(To do if the damage is not too important)



Baking speculaas

Baking speculaas:

Preheat the oven to 356°F (180° C).

*Put the baking tray in the oven and let it bake about 10 minutes or more depending on the thickness.
(example : the cat 15min)*

*I advise to test with a subject and to check the time of baking.
At the end of baking the speculaas is still tender,
let cool and harden on the baking tray.*

If after cooling, the speculaas has not hardened completely (if the back of the speculaas is still tender), you can always put it back in the oven to finish baking, adjust the baking time for the rest.

In order to avoid that the speculaas should burn you can also lower the temperature to maximum 320°F (160°C) after 2/3 baking time, the risk of burning is lower and the speculaas can dry even further.



Keep speculaas, either in an airtight metal box, either in a sheet of aluminium.