



## Makroota-Aniseed Cookies



Sugar-free date cookies, also called makroota. This Arabic dessert, a Palestinian delicacy is a delicious combination of spices. It's sweetened only by the date filling.

These are delicious and aromatic and super easy to make leaving your house smelling amazing!

### Ingredients

- ½ teaspoon dry yeast
- 2 tablespoons warm water
- 1 ½ cups plain flour
- ½ tablespoon aniseed whole
- ½ tablespoon aniseed ground
- ½ tablespoon cardamon ground
- ½ tablespoon sesame seeds
- ½ tablespoon nigella seeds
- pinch of salt
- ½ tablespoon mahlab (optional)
- ½ cup olive oil
- 75 ml warm water
- 350 grams pitted dates
- 2 tablespoons roughly ground walnuts (optional)

### Cook's Note

\*You can use 'ready to use date paste' if accessible

\*These cookies will keep for at least 3 weeks

\*Spelt flour can be a substitute to plain flour

\*If the dough is too moist add a little bit of flour

\*Adding ¼ teaspoon of sugar to the yeast will simply speed up the activation process but is not necessary.

### Step 1

Preheat oven to 180°C.

In a small bowl combine yeast with 2 tablespoons of warm water. Dilute, cover with a saucer and set aside for 10 minutes.

To make the dough, mix the flour, spices and seeds in a medium size bowl. Add the olive oil and crumble using your fingers until somewhat crumbly. Pour in the diluted yeast and warm water and knead until you have a uniform dough ball. Rest for a 30 minutes.

### Step 2

To prepare the date filling, drizzle approximately 1 tablespoon of olive over the dates and microwave for 3 minutes to soften. Stir mixture until it becomes a paste. Dip your hands in olive oil so the mixture does not stick and roll into a smooth ball. Alternatively soften over medium to low heat over the stove. Cool.



### Step 3

Divide dough and dates into 4 equal portions. Roll out dough into 1 cm thick rounds. Dip your hands in olive oil and flatten one date portion on a non-stick paper or stretch out with your hands. Place over the dough and gently press. Sprinkle ½ a tablespoon of walnut across the middle. Roll, pressing firmly into a log! Place joint side down and gently flatten. Using a sharp knife, slice on an angle into 3-4 cm thick pieces. Carefully transfer the cookies onto tray lined with non stick paper and place 3 cm apart (dough side up). Bake for approximately 15-20 minutes or until the cookies are golden brown. Repeat.



Alternatively divide the pastry into two portions. Oil a 23 cm round baking tin. On an oiled bench, roll out one dough portion using your hands and place in the base of the baking tin. Stretch and flatten date on a non-stick paper and place over the dough pressing gently to spread the date evenly (best done with oily hands) Scatter walnuts all over. Roll out remaining dough and place on top spreading gently to cover the date.



Using a sharp knife, slice in half. Then cut each half in half, then each quarter in half. Next, cut each section making diamond cuts. Bake for approximately 20 minutes or golden in colour. Set aside to cool.

*As we say in Arabic, Sahtan - Enjoy in Good Health.*

