

Italian Sesame Cookies



This is a delicious family recipe that's been handed down for at least 4 generations in Annette's family. These cookies are covered with sesame seeds and have a slight hint of orange flavoring. They have a lightly sweetened flavor and are great to be eaten by themselves or dipped in coffee.

This recipe requires a kitchen scale. You could use an old postal scale that you pick up in a second hand store.

It also requires a 12-quart pot for mixing the ingredients in.

Yield: Hundreds of cookies – we've never actually counted, but it's lots and lots.

The great thing about his cookies recipe is that it can be made 8 to 12 weeks before an event. If they are stored in a closed container – tin or plastic – the flavor remains the same.

You'll see these traditional Italian Sesame cookies at weddings, holidays, and sometimes at funerals. They are low in sugar and have the feel of a biscotti type cookie.

Ingredients:

- 4 lbs. Flour
- 6 tsp. or ¼ cup Baking Powder
- 1 ¼ lbs. Sugar
- Pinch of Salt
- 1 ¼ lbs. Vegetable Shortening
- 8 to 10 Eggs
- Juice of 1 Lemon
- Juice of 1 Orange along with grating the skin (orange zest or peel)
- 2 tsp. Vanilla or 2 tsp. Orange Extract
- 1 lbs. Sesame Seeds

We use an old hand cranked [meat grinder](#) with a modified sausage funnel nozzle attachment that puts grooves down the length of the cookie. This dough is probably too thick for using a plastic cookie gun on.

And a large tin or plastic container to store the cookies in.

Directions:

1. Dry Ingredients:

Mix dry ingredients into a 12-quart pot in the order listed above: Flour, Baking Powder, Sugar and Pinch of Salt.

Add Shortening. Use a [pastry blender](#) to breakup and mix in shortening.

We know that using shortening seems unhealthy, but we've tried to substitute margarine or butter and the recipe just doesn't come out the same.

2. Wet Ingredients:

Next, beat the eggs and add lemon juice.

Grate the rind of an orange and mix into the flour mixture.

Squeeze the juice of an orange into liquid mixture, add vanilla, orange extract or both, and mix these ingredients well.

3. Mixing Dry and Wet Together

Next pour the liquid mixture into the flour mixture and stir with a tall, thick, sturdy wooden spoon (Annette has a sturdy [bamboo spoon](#) that she likes the best).

Remove any pretty jewelry (rings and bracelets) before the next step.

4 Mixing By Hand

Now it's time to dig and get "dirty." Mix the final dough with your hands until you get a soft, yet firm ball.

5. Forming The Cookies

Set up a large [cookie sheet](#) near your hand cranked cookie machine. Cover the cookie sheet with Sesame Seeds and lightly spray with water.

Take a generous handful of dough and place it into the feed top of your meat grinder/cookie maker.

We have an old funnel tip with "V" shaped grooves cut in it. As you crank the dough through the grinder gently grab the "snake" like cookies coming out of the other end. Cut into 4-inch lengths.

6. Preheat Oven to 350 degrees

7. Roll Cookies in Moistened Sesame Seeds

Roll the cookie dough onto the moistened Sesame Seeds – the water causes them to stick to the dough better than leaving them dry.

Line up in rows on an ungreased cookie sheet and place in oven.

8. Bake Cookies

Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, until lightly golden brown.

We usually put 2 large cookie sheets in our oven at one time.

Make sure your oven racks are spaced well apart to allow for even cooking and circulation of the heat in the oven.

If you have a convection oven you'll have to adjust the cooking time.

Once the cookies cool, gently and neatly stack them inside of a large tin or plastic container.