

Christmas Gingerbreads

Gingerbreads are unforgettable part of Czech Christmas. Preparation is not difficult, you just need to put baked gingerbreads aside for 2 weeks and wait till they soften. That's why you can start baking at the start of December. You can cut different shapes of animals and motives from the dough. Also you can prepare sections and build a house or tree. Advent wreath from gingerbread is also amazing. After baking we can decorate them with sugar topping.

Ingredients

- 500g of soft wheat flour
- 250g of powdered sugar
- 3 eggs
- 100g of honey
- 50g of butter
- 1 tsp of baking soda
- 1tsp of cinnamon
- 3 dried cloves
- 1 tsp of anise
- 1 allspice
- lemon peel

Directions

1. Lightly warm up honey and crush spice in mortar.
2. Mix all ingredients together and knead into a dough.
3. Put dough in bag and let in fridge for 2 days.
4. Take small parts one by one and roll them thin. Cut shapes of your choice and lay them on baking paper.

5. Bake in preheated oven 180°C for 3-5 minutes.

Apricot Filled Curd Cheese Dumplings

Sweet fruit dumplings (ovocné knedlíky) are unreservedly linked to summer days. But as always there are many ways how to cook this sweet recipe. You can prepare fruit dumplings from leavened dough, curd cheese or potato dough. In this recipe we use curd cheese dough. Dumplings are filled with various fruits e.g. apricots, blueberries, strawberries, plums, whatever you like. After that dumplings are cooked in boiling water and served in several ways. For example sprinkled with grated curd cheese, melted butter and sugared or with sugar, cocoa, melted butter and whipped cream. This recipe for curd cheese apricot dumplings is really quick and delicious.

Ingredients

- 200g of fine wheat flour (or 100g of semolina and 100g of fine wheat flour)
- 250g of curd cheese
- 100g of butter
- egg
- 40g of sugar
- icing sugar
- apricots (or any other fruit you like)
- blueberries
- sour cream

- pinch of salt

Directions

1. Put egg, sugar, melted butter and curd cheese to the bowl. Whisk it all together, so long until the mixture is smooth.
2. Then you can add flour and stir it again so long until the smooth dough.
3. Roll the dough and divide it into smaller parts. Every part spread by your fingers, put pitted apricot into the middle (you can put sugar into the apricot) and wrap it into the dumpling.
4. Cook it in boiling salted water for 6-8 minutes.
5. Serve dusted with icing sugar, melted butter, sour cream and fruit e.g. blueberries.



Strawberry Popsicles

Summer just started (in the Northern Hemisphere) and that's great time to bring you some summer recipes full of fruits. In Czech Republic roads are surrounded with small stalls selling fruits like strawberries and other berries. Strawberries are one of the favorites fruits among kids. So why not prepare an icy refreshment for your sweeties. Strawberry popsicles or ice

lollies are awfully easy and good. And when served in icy fruit bowl, even your hubby won't resist.

Ingredients

- 500g of strawberries
- 200g of sugar
- 200ml of water

Directions

1. First prepare the syrup. Boil down water with sugar until it gets thick.
2. Squash strawberries and mix them in the syrup.
3. Pour mixture in popsicle forms and put a wooden stick.
4. Put to freezer over night.

Tip for serving

1. Prepare two bowls. Line first bowl with sliced strawberries.
 2. Put smaller bowl on them. Pour water between the bowls and put to freezer.
 3. Before serving put bowls in hot water and take out frozen bowl with strawberries.
 4. Serve strawberry pops in icy bowls.
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Babovka – Czech Marble Cake

Czech Bábovka or Marble cake is typical sweet bakery product. Many people remember the time when they were children and there was always a marble cake on their grandmother's kitchen table. Most people prepare a two-coloured cake with dark and light parts, hence the term marble cake. You can add a lot of ingredients into the dough to make your marble cake unique, e.g. raisins, candied, chocolate or nuts. Marble cake is baked in a special form with a hole in the middle and it is decorated by sprinkling with powder sugar.

Ingredients

- 330g of soft wheat flour
- 330g of icing sugar
- 125ml of milk
- 180g of butter
- 4 eggs
- 1 spoon of cocoa
- 1 spoon of baking soda

Directions

1. Put softened butter, sugar and yolks to the bowl and stir it together. You can do it manually or use a food processor.
2. Mix flour, sugar and baking soda together and then add slowly this mix into the yolk mixture and mix it together.
3. Make whipped egg whites and add it into the dough using spatula.

4. Separate one third of dough, put there a cocoa and mix it. Now you have a dark part of dough.
5. Grease a form for a marble cake using butter and then sprinkle the form with flour.
6. Put one part of the light dough into the form and then the dark dough and finally a rest of the light dough.
7. Give the form in preheated oven 180°C (F) for 50minutes.
8. Tip! Use wooden skewer to try if the marble cake is ready. Stick the wooden sticker into the highest place of the cake and if there isn't a dough on a stick, your marble cake is ready.
9. Take the form out of the oven and after 5 minutes you can put it out of the form and sprinkle it with sugar.



Marble Cake Form

Bublanina – Cherry Sponge Cake

Bublanina is a classic sponge cake baked during summer season. Mainly during season of cherries, strawberries and other berries. You can say that this sponge cake can be made with almost every fruit from people's gardens – cherry, plums, strawberries, raspberries, peaches and so on. It's fluffy and ideal with your afternoon tea or coffee.

Ingredients

- 350 g of soft wheat flour
- 6 eggs
- 100 g of butter
- 200 g of sugar
- 1 vanilla sugar
- 50 g of powdered sugar
- baking powder
- 400 g of cherries

Directions

1. Mix butter with sugar and vanilla sugar and gradually add yolks.
2. Whip egg whites and powdered sugar.
3. Mix yolk mixture with whipped eggs and flour with baking powder.
4. Put dough in baking tray (greased and dusted with flour) and lay pitted cherries on top.
5. Bake in preheated oven 160°C (320°F) for 40 minutes.
6. Dust with powdered sugar and serve.

Apple Strudel

Apple strudel is traditional Czech pastry that have its origin in Austrian cuisine. It's very popular dessert in Czech cuisine and across Central Europe thanks to history of Austro-Hungarian Empire. Apple strudel is quite easy to prepare thanks to the option of buying prepared pastry dough. However

old-fashioned people still make their own dough.

Ingredients

- Phyllo or flaky pastry
- 4-6 apples
- cinnamon sugar
- egg
- powdered sugar
- raisins, walnuts (optional)

Directions

1. Roll out pastry in slim rectangle.
2. Grate apples and put them on dough. Add raisins or chopped walnuts if you want.
3. Sprinkle apples with cinnamon sugar.
4. Roll up dough into long cylinder and close both ends.
5. At last brush strudel with whisked egg.
6. Put in preheated oven 200°C (390°F) for about 20 minutes until strudel has nice golden color.
7. Dust with powdered sugar. Apple strudel can be served with whipped cream.