



Benne Wafers (Sesame Cookies)

Benne (pronounced benny) is the heirloom ancestor to modern day sesame seeds. In the South the old strain survives and is used in all sorts of sweet and savoury dishes. One of the most popular are these thin, bite-sized cookies beloved all over the South, especially in South Carolina, where they're popular gifts and party favours.

Makes about 60 biscuits

INGREDIENTS

- ¼ cup sesame seeds (35g/1¼oz)
- 75g butter, softened (2¾oz)
- ½ cup brown sugar (110g/4oz)
- ½ lightly beaten egg
- ¼ teaspoon vanilla extract
- ¾ cup plain flour, plus extra for dusting (105g/3¾oz)
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- Pinch salt flakes, crushed

METHOD

1. Toast the sesame seeds in a heavy-based frying pan over medium heat for a few minutes, until golden and aromatic, stirring frequently.
2. Place butter in the bowl of an electric mixer and beat until creamy.
3. Beat in the sugar in several batches.
4. Beat in egg and vanilla.
5. Stir in sesame seeds.
6. Combine flour, baking powder and salt, then stir into the butter mixture.
7. Cover and refrigerate for an hour or so.
8. Preheat oven to 170°C (340°F).
9. Roll the dough into small balls (about ½ teaspoon), dusting your fingers with a little flour if the dough is too sticky.
10. Place the balls on baking paper-lined baking trays with about 3cm (1") around them so they can spread out.
11. Flatten with flour-dusted fingertips leaving the top as smooth as possible.
12. Bake for 7–9 minutes until lightly browned.
13. Lift the baking paper off the tray to a wire rack until the wafers are crisp, then transfer the wafers to the rack to cool completely.

