

Polvorónes

These Spanish shortbreads hail from the southern region of Andalusia and are particularly popular at Christmas time. The name comes from the Spanish word polvo, meaning powder or dust, referring to their crumbly texture - the dough is the crumbliest I've ever worked with! They're popular in Latin America and the Philippines and often called mantecados elsewhere in Spain. Technically polvorónes are just one type of mantecado which refers to any shortbread originally made with pork lard (manteca). In the days of the Spanish Inquisition, eating mantecados was a sign of Christianity, these days people often use butter instead of the lard. To make it more confusing, mantecado can also refer to a type of ice cream in some countries and parts of Spain, so let's stick with polvorónes! They can be stored in an airtight container in a cool place for up to a week.

Makes 8 pieces

INGREDIENTS

- 60g blanched almonds
- 75g butter
- ⅓ cup castor sugar
- Pinch salt flakes, crushed
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¾ cup plain flour
- Icing sugar, for dusting



METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 150°C.
2. Spread almonds on a baking tray.
3. Place in the oven for 8-10 minutes, until lightly coloured, stirring occasionally.
4. Remove from oven, reduce temperature to 120°C and set almonds aside to cool a little.
5. Place cooled almonds in a food processor with 2 teaspoons of the sugar and pulse just until they're finely ground. Set aside.
6. Beat butter, remaining sugar, salt and cinnamon in the bowl of an electric mixer until creamy.
7. Fold in the ground almond and flour.
8. Tip onto a clean, dry work surface and squeeze the mixture into a crumbly dough.
9. Divide dough into 8 pieces (it will be very crumbly but should just come together when squeezed).
10. Squeeze a piece into a ball, press it into a 4-5cm wide disc in the palm of your hand, keeping it as round as possible.
11. Place on a baking paper-lined baking tray and repeat with remaining pieces of dough.
12. Bake for 25-30 minutes, until firm and the edges just start to colour slightly.
13. Set aside to cool on the tray.
14. Dust generously with icing sugar and serve.