



## Date Ma'amoul

Similar to shortbread with a date filling, these cookies are an essential part of Ramadan feasts in Lebanon. The dough can be filled with walnuts or dates; all that changes traditionally, apart from the filling, is the *tabe* (wooden mould) used to shape them, so that guests know which flavour they're selecting. Date is traditionally round and flat and walnut is round and domed. Use just orange blossom or just rosewater if you like.

**Makes about 16**

### INGREDIENTS

- 175g pitted dried dates, chopped
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 25g butter
- Icing sugar, for dusting (optional)

### Dough

- 175g fine semolina
- 25g plain flour
- 25g castor sugar
- Pinch salt flakes, crushed
- 75g cold butter, cubed
- 2 teaspoons rosewater, or more if needed
- 2 teaspoons orange blossom water, or more if needed

### METHOD

1. Make Dough: Combine semolina, flour, sugar and salt in a mixing bowl and use the tips of your fingers to rub in the butter until completely incorporated. Add rose and orange blossom waters and mix to form a soft, smooth dough, adding a dash more if necessary. Roll into a ball, wrap in plastic and set aside for at least 30 minutes.
2. Preheat oven to 180°C.
3. Place dates, cinnamon and butter in a food processor and blitz into a smooth paste.
4. Divide into 16 even-sized pieces – I do this by rolling it into a log, cutting it in half, then cutting each piece in half three more times. Roll each piece into a ball.
5. Divide dough into 16 even-sized pieces.
6. Roll a piece of dough into a ball then press it with the palms of your hands to flatten it into a disc.
7. Place a ball of the date mixture in the centre and pinch the dough around it to enclose it.
8. Gently roll it into a ball.
9. If using a mould, gently press the ball into it, sealed side facing up, then tap on the bench to loosen it and tip it into your hand.
10. Place onto a baking paper-lined baking tray, seam side down.
11. Repeat with remaining dough and date mixture.
12. Place in oven for 12 minutes or so, until crisp but not coloured.
13. Transfer to a wire rack to cool, serve sprinkled with icing sugar if you like.

