

Spice cookies

MAKES 16 COOKIES

¾ cup plus 2 tbsp / 125 g currants
2 tbsp brandy
scant 2 cups / 240 g all-purpose flour
1½ tsp best-quality cocoa powder
½ tsp baking powder
¼ tsp baking soda
½ tsp each ground cinnamon, allspice, ginger, and nutmeg
¼ tsp salt
5 oz / 150 g good-quality dark chocolate, coarsely grated
½ cup / 125 g unsalted butter, at room temperature
⅔ cup / 125 g superfine sugar
1 tsp vanilla extract
½ tsp grated lemon zest
½ tsp grated orange zest
½ large free-range egg
1 tbsp diced candied citrus peel

GLAZE

3 tbsp freshly squeezed lemon juice
1 cups / 160 g confectioners' sugar

During the late nineteenth century, as part of their Protestant beliefs, the Templers arrived in Jerusalem from Europe and established the German colony, a picturesque little neighborhood southwest of the Old City that to this day feels unusually central European. This is the “civilized” part of town, where you go for a coffee and a slice of Sacher torte if you wish to escape the harsh Levantine reality.

Germanic influences on the city's food are evident in Christian contexts—the famous Austrian hospice at the heart of the Old City serves superb strudels and proper schnitzels—but Czech, Austrian, Hungarian, and German Jews arriving in the city from the 1930s have also managed to stamp their mark, opening cafés and bakeries serving many Austro-Hungarian classics (see page 284). *Duvshanyot*, round iced cookies, made with honey and spices, typically for Rosh Hashanah, are possibly a result of this heritage; they are similar to *Pfeffernüsse*.

These are very loosely inspired by *duvshanyot*, or *Pfeffernüsse*. They are actually more closely related to an Italian spice cookie and are hugely popular on the sweet counter at *Ottolenghi* over Easter and Christmas. The recipe was adapted from the excellent *The International Cookie Cookbook* by Nancy Baggett.

Soak the currants in the brandy for 10 minutes. Mix together the flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, baking soda, spices, salt, and dark chocolate. Mix well with a whisk.

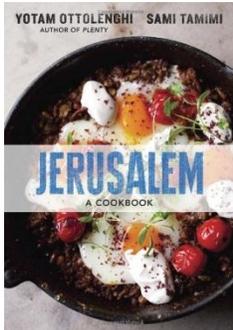
Put the butter, sugar, vanilla, and lemon and orange zest in a stand mixer fitted with the beater attachment and beat to combine but not aerate much, about 1 minute. With the mixer running, slowly add the egg and mix for about

1 minute. Add the dry ingredients, followed by the currants and brandy. Mix until everything comes together.

Gently knead the dough in the bowl with your hands until it comes together and is uniform. Divide the dough into 1¼-oz / 50g chunks and shape each chunk into a perfectly round ball. Place the balls on 1 or 2 baking sheets lined with parchment paper, spacing them about ¾ inch / 2 cm apart, and let rest in the fridge for at least 1 hour.

Preheat the oven to 375°F / 190°C. Bake the cookies for 15 to 20 minutes, until the top firms up but the center is still slightly soft. Remove from the oven. Once the cookies are out of the oven, allow to cool for only 5 minutes, and then transfer to a wire rack. While the cookies are still warm, whisk together the glaze ingredients

until a thin and smooth icing forms. Pour 1 tablespoon of the glaze over each biscuit, leaving it to drip and coat the biscuit with a very thin, almost transparent film. Finish each with 3 pieces of candied peel placed at the center. Leave to set and serve, or store in an airtight container for a day or two.



Jerusalem: A Cookbook by Yotam Ottolenghi and Sami Tamimi;
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