

## Canistrelli

Pastis adds to the anise flavor of these cookies along with anise seeds. You can use another anise-based spirit, such as absinthe, anisette, raki, or ouzo. You could, conceivably, use another liqueur (such as orange-based liqueur) although traditional Canistrelli are flavored with anise, so you might need to come up with a new name for your original creations if you don't use pastis or the optional anise seeds :) As long as you've got anise in there somewhere, though, I think you're good to go.

(If you want to make your own pastis, there's a recipe in my book, *Drinking French*.)

Parchment paper makes these cookies easy to roll out. You could also roll them out on a well-sugared countertop and bake the cookies on a silicone baking mat. Just note the cookie dough is on the sticky side and the parchment paper really helps. Avoid chilling the dough overnight or anything like that as it can become too wet and soggy.

Nuts are not always added to Canistrelli and they do make them look a little rougher, which I don't mind. I use almonds but I saw some in Corsica made with hazelnuts, however you can leave them out.

Note: These cookies are quite firm after baking but will soften up a little overnight, so plan accordingly.

**Course** Dessert

**Servings** 25 cookies

- 1 1/2 cups (200g) flour
  - 1/2 cup (100g) sugar
  - 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder, preferably aluminum-free
  - 1/2 teaspoon salt
  - 1/2 teaspoon anise seeds, lightly crushed (these are optional but I like them a lot in these cookies)
  - 1/3 cup (80ml) extra-virgin, olive oil
  - 1/3 cup (80ml) pastis, (see headnote)
  - 2 tablespoons (30ml) dry white wine, (or water)
  - 1/3 cup (40g) lightly toasted almonds, coarsely chopped (optional, see headnote)
1. Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C). Adjust the oven rack to the upper to mid-third of the oven. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat. Prepare two sheets of parchment paper that are approximately 10 - 12-inches (25cm) squares or rectangles for rolling the dough. (To save resources, you can instead use the parchment sheets you've used to rolling the dough to line the baking sheet later.)
  2. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, sugar, baking powder, salt, and almonds and anise seeds, if using.
  3. Make a well in the center of the dry ingredients with a spatula then add the olive oil, pastis, and white wine or water. Stir the mixture until it starts clumping together, then use your hands to gently knead the dough so it's cohesive, but won't be completely smooth if you used the almonds. The dough will be rather soft.
  4. To roll the dough, sprinkle 3/4 tablespoon of sugar on one sheet of the parchment paper roughly in a 6-inch (15cm) circle. Place the dough on top of the sugar. Lay the second sheet of parchment over the dough and pat it down into a flat square shape with your hand. Lift the parchment paper, sprinkle the remaining 3/4 tablespoon over the top of the dough, replace the parchment, and roll the dough until it's about 1/4-inch thick, which is will be about an 8-inch (20cm) square.
  5. To cut the cookies, trim the edges with a chef's knife or metal pastry scraper to make a neater square. Use the knife or scraper to cut the cookies into 25 squares.
  6. Because the dough is rather soft, to place the cookies on the baking sheet, slide the blade of a chef's knife or pastry scraper under one of the rows of the squares of dough and transfer them onto the baking sheet. Don't worry if they look a little funky after you move them; they're rustic cookies and part of their charm is they can be a bit misshapen. You can reroll any scraps between the parchment to make a few more cookies if you'd like.
  7. Bake for 20 minutes, rotating the baking sheet midway during baking. Some of the cookies at the edges may get darker faster than the others. Feel free to move the cookies around on the baking sheet when you rotate the pan. If the cookies are not quite done after 20 minutes, turn the oven off but leave the cookies in the oven with the door closed until the cookies are light golden brown across the top, about 5 additional minutes.

### Notes

**Storage:** The cookies are best after the next day; they'll soften up a bit to the right texture. The cookies should be kept in an air-tight container at room temperature. They'll keep for up to a week.