



## Spelt Honey Spice Cookies

There are an innumerable number of giner/spice honey cookie recipes out there. They've been made all over the world for hundreds of years. These are the ones I settled on this year. They are great fresh from the oven, become even more crispy once cooled and keep very well. I used local spelt flour because I love its flavour and I topped mine with my own 100% 'bean-to-bar' cacao chocolate and some freshly grated orange zest.

The cookies are loosely based on the originally-Belgian Lebkuchen. Some recipes for this use butter and egg. A lot of them also use old leavening agents. My son has intolerances to dairy and eggs, so I chose to leave out the eggs and use lard instead of butter. You could swap this fat out for another, if you prefer. Play with whatever spices you like!

### Here's my recipe:

Makes around 12 2-inch cookies

*For the 'fermented' dough:*

125g spelt flour (I used 50% wholegrain, 50% white)

125g honey (I used chestnut)

*For the main dough:*

All of the above 'ferment'

Spices (I used 5 cloves, 3/4tsp aniseed, 1/2tsp nutmeg, 7 all-spice berries, 2tsp ginger and 1/2tsp cinnamon. I ground the whole spices before adding.)

Pinch of salt

*Recipes to accompany video on Fermented Gingerbread by Alison Kay of [www.ancestralkitchen.com](http://www.ancestralkitchen.com)*

1 1/4tsp baking powder

16g lard

Splash or two of water, enough to help make a pliable dough

*Method:*

Break the fermented dough up into small pieces and place in the bottom of a mixing bowl.

Add the spices, salt, baking powder, lard and water

Work the mix with your hand until it is well-combined. Try not to over-work as this will make it harder to roll out.

Flour a board and rolling pin and roll out the dough, cutting cookies and then scrunching up the dough when finished to make another batch (note if your dough is too sticky to do this, you can wrap it and place it in the fridge for an hour before trying again).

Put the cookies on a greased or baking paper-covered baking sheet and bake at 180C for 8-10 minutes until ever-so-slightly coloured. Watch them carefully as they will burn easily.

## Pain d'Epices-style Sourdough Rye Spice Bread



After having read much about the French Pain d'Epices, I really wanted to try making my fermented rye dough into a more 'breadly' gingerbread. I remember eating gingerbread like this as a child in the UK and I loved it. I didn't want it to be as sweet as the cookies, so I added more flour. I also wanted it to have it rise using natural yeasts, so I incorporated some sourdough discard. Because the fermented dough is quite firm, this is best made using a strong food processor/mixer.

### **Here's my recipe:**

Makes a cake that will fill an 8-inch sandwich tin

*For the fermented dough:*

125g whole grain rye flour

100g honey

25g black strap molasses

*For the main dough:*

All of the above 'ferment'

70g wholegrain rye flour

100g whole grain rye sourdough starter discard

200ml almond milk (I made this at home, but you could buy it)

*Recipes to accompany video on Fermented Gingerbread by Alison Kay of [www.ancestralkitchen.com](http://www.ancestralkitchen.com)*

1/8 tsp salt

1 tsp ground cinnamon

1 1/2 tsp ground nutmeg

1/4 tsp ground cloves

1/2 tsp ground anise

3/4 tsp ground all spice berries

4 tsp ground ginger

1 1/2 tbsp grated orange zest

60g raisins

pinch of salt

*Method:*

Break the fermented dough up into small pieces and place it into your mixer/processor.

Add all the other ingredients except the raisins and process until you have a thick mixture that is the consistency of fruit cake batter (add extra milk if needed).

Add the raisins to the batter, stirring well.

Grease and/or line your sandwich cake tin (I use a loose bottom one for easy removal)

Pile your batter into the tin and level it off

Cover the tin in preparation for fermentation. If the level of the dough is relatively low, you can cover it in clingfilm, if you're worried that it'll rise above the level of the pan, tent it with a fly screen and cover the fly screen with damp tea towels. Put the pan somewhere warm to rise.

When the batter is 75% risen (this took around 5 hours for me), preheat your oven to 180C and bake for c.40 minutes. Check it's done by touch (it should feel relatively firm), by putting a clean knife in the centre and checking it comes out clean or by temperature - mine was 96C.