

# Thorin's Spice Surprise



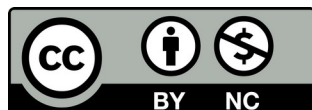
Spiced cookies with ginger, tonka, cardamom and chilli,  
with white glaze and orange-ginger topping

Dreamed up for Dream210 2025 Cookie Competition

## Changelog:

v1.1 Minor tweaks, fixed typos

v1.2 Changed topping method, remove confusing/redundant text



## Notes

- I use “Grafschafter Goldsaft”, which is a German sugar beet syrup. If sugar beet syrup is not available you can use cane molasses or dark treacle. As a twist you could also try tamarind syrup, pomegranate molasses or maple syrup, though these vary a lot in sweetness and intensity. You will have to experiment with the amounts.
- If you don't have a mortar available, use pre-ground chilli and cardamom powder. Add powdered spices and salt to the dry mix.
- Use roughly ½ a tonka bean (beans vary), aiming for ½ tsp finely ground tonka. If using tonka paste, follow the label; as a guideline, 2–4 tsp paste usually matches this batch depending on strength.
- If you don't have tonka available replace it with 1 pod vanilla and ¼ tsp of almond extract. Scrape out the seeds of 1 pod of vanilla, mix well with a spoon of sugar and the almond extract, then use like tonka.
- Use aromatic, red, medium-hot chilli flakes or powder. Good options include Chaotianjiao, Turkish Maraş biberi or Acı pul biber. For less heat, use Korean Gochugaru or Turkish Urfa (isot). Avoid very heat-forward chillies (or use them only as a small booster), e.g. pure Cayenne or Bird's Eye. You want flavour, not just burn. For a smoky twist, try a little Chipotle!
- You might want to adjust the amount of chilli depending on your preferred heat level and how spicy yours is. I use a red Sichuan-style chilli mix, for this ¾-1 tsp comes out about right.
- If using fresh ginger: chop it first, then crush it to a fine paste in a mortar with a spoonful of sugar, and add it to the wet mix. Keep 1 tbsp paste for topping. Because fresh ginger adds moisture, you may want to add 1–2 tbsp flour (or chill the dough a bit longer) to keep the dough easy to handle and the shapes sharp.
- I originally used orange juice for the glaze (since you already need an orange for the zest) but I prefer it to be a bit more acidic, plus it helps the glaze dry uniformly. You can use orange juice, but maybe add a pinch of citric acid or a few drops of lemon juice concentrate to bring acidity up.
- tsp = teaspoon; tbsp = tablespoon

## Ingredients

Makes for ~100pcs Ø 4cm cookies (3 sheets).

### Dough

#### *Wet mix*

- 170 g unsalted butter, room temperature
- 160 g panela or muscovado *sugar (or regular brown sugar)*, finely crushed if chunky
- 90 g dark sugar beet syrup (Goldsaft/Zuckerrübensirup) (*see notes*)
  - 2 medium eggs: 1 whole egg + 1 extra yolk (*reserve 1 white for the glaze*)
  - ½ tsp finely ground tonka bean (*or vanilla, see notes*)

#### *Dry mix*

- 400 g all-purpose flour (Type 405)
- 1½ tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp baking soda (Natron)
- 2½ tsp ginger powder (*or 20-25 g fresh ginger, see notes*)
- 18–20 green cardamom pods (less if large/very fresh), seeds only (*or 1½-2 tsp pre-ground cardamom*)
- ~1 tsp hot chilli flakes (*or ½ tsp chilli powder*) (**see notes!**)
- ½ tsp salt

### Topping

- 2 tbsp white sugar
- 1 tsp ginger powder (*or 6-8 g fresh ginger, see notes*)
- Zest of ½ orange (*lemon or lime works for a twist*)
- Optional: pinch more ground cardamom and/or chilli to adjust spice level

### Glaze

- 125 g icing sugar (powdered sugar), sifted if lumpy
- 1 egg white (leftover from wet mix)
- 1 tsp lemon juice (*see notes*)

# Method

## 1. Prepare topping

- 1.1 Grate orange zest into a small bowl, ideally with a microplane or other fine grater.
- 1.2 Add sugar and ginger powder and, if you like, some more ground cardamom or chilli. Mix well with a spoon until uniform.
- 1.3 Spread out the topping on a plate or baking sheet to dry.

## 2. Mix the dry ingredients

- 2.1 Crack 18–20 cardamom pods, discard husks.
- 2.2 If you're using pre-ground spices, skip the mortar and add the spices and salt directly to the dry mix. Otherwise, grind the cardamom seeds with the chilli flakes and salt in a mortar to a fine powder. It's fine if a few chilli flakes remain.
- 2.3 In a bowl, whisk together: flour, baking powder, baking soda, ginger powder, salt, cardamom and chilli until evenly mixed.

## 3. Make the dough

- 3.1 Crush sugar if it's chunky.
- 3.2 Cream butter and sugar for ~2 minutes (by hand or with a mixer).
- 3.3 Add sugar beet syrup and ground tonka; mix until smooth.
- 3.4 Add 1 whole egg and 1 extra yolk, mix to combine.
- 3.5 Add the dry mix and mix with a wooden spoon or kneading hook attachment until just combined (don't over-mix/knead!).
- 3.6 Flatten into a disk, wrap in cling film, and chill for 60 minutes.

## 4. Shape cookies and bake

- 4.1 Preheat oven to 160°C fan (Umluft), or 175°C top/bottom heat if fan mode isn't available.
- 4.2 Roll dough on baking paper to 4 mm thickness (dust lightly with flour or icing sugar if needed). If dough gets soft/greasy while rolling, chill it for 10 minutes.
- 4.3 Cut 40 mm discs (or other shapes).
- 4.4 Bake on middle rack for 8–10 minutes. Edges should only just start to darken. If your cookies brown too fast, drop temperature by 10°C.
- 4.5 Cool a few minutes on the tray, then transfer to a wire rack and cool completely before glazing.

## **5. Prepare topping for application**

- 5.1 The topping should be dry enough to crumble between fingers. Scrape back into a bowl and crush any large lumps by hand or with the back of a spoon. Don't overdo it, it should remain grainy.
- 5.2 Fill a large-hole sugar shaker (dredger) with the topping. Alternatively, you can sprinkle it on by hand.

## **6. Make and apply the glaze and topping**

- 6.1 Beat egg whites until foamy.
- 6.2 Sift icing sugar if it is very lumpy. Add icing sugar to egg whites gradually; beat until thick and smooth.
- 6.3 Beat in 1 tsp lemon juice.
- 6.4 Thin with a few drops of lemon juice or water at a time until it levels in 5–10 seconds. If it runs off edges, add more icing sugar.
- 6.5 Brush a thin layer onto each cookie with a silicone brush, then put it on a baking paper sheet or silicone mat to dry. Alternatively, use a piping bag with a small nozzle to apply the glaze. Do one sheet at a time so you can add topping before it sets.
- 6.6 While the glaze is still wet, apply the topping with the shaker, or just sprinkle it on by hand.
- 6.7 Let dry in a dry room. If your room is very humid, place them in the oven with the light on (no heat) and the door slightly ajar for airflow. Dry to the touch in ~1 hour, fully set in ~24 hours. For a crisper cookie (I prefer them crisp), leave uncovered for ~48 hours before boxing; box after ~24 hours if you prefer them softer.

## **7. Eat cookies**

Phew, that's it. Enjoy your cookies. And don't forget to share them with others. :D