

Sekerpere (Syrup-Soaked Semolina Cookies)

Turkish · Dessert · Easy · 40 min total · Serves 12

Sekerpere are small, soft semolina cookies, each topped with a hazelnut and soaked in cool lemon syrup straight from the oven. Tender and buttery, they are a common sight on Turkish dessert trays.

Ingredients

- 0.5 cup unsalted butter (softened)
- 0.25 cup sugar (for the dough)
- 1 large egg yolk
- 0.25 cup plain whole-milk yogurt
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 cup fine semolina
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1.5 cup sugar (for the syrup)
- 1.5 cup water (for the syrup)
- 1 tbsp lemon juice (for the syrup)
- 24 blanched hazelnuts (one per cookie)

Method

1. Make the syrup first: combine 1.5 cups sugar, 1.5 cups water and the lemon juice in a saucepan. Bring to a boil and simmer for 8 to 10 minutes until slightly syrupy, then refrigerate until completely cold.
2. Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C) and line a baking sheet with parchment.
3. Beat the softened butter and 1/4 cup sugar for 2 to 3 minutes until light and fluffy. Beat in the egg yolk, yogurt and vanilla.
4. Whisk the semolina, flour and baking powder together, then stir into the butter mixture until a soft, cohesive dough forms. Rest the dough for 15 minutes so the semolina hydrates; it should feel soft, not sticky.
5. Roll the dough into 24 balls about 1 tablespoon each. Flatten each slightly between your palms, press a hazelnut into the center of each, and space them 2 inches (5 cm) apart on the sheet.
6. Bake for 18 to 20 minutes, until the cookies are pale golden on top and deeper golden at the edges and base.
7. Spoon the cold syrup slowly over the hot cookies as they come out of the oven, coating each one so it soaks in with a gentle sizzle.
8. Let the cookies rest at room temperature for at least 1 hour, until they have absorbed most of the syrup, then serve.