

Greek Almond Pears

Crunchy on the outside, chewy on the inside with a snowy dusting of icing sugar, these bite size Greek Almond Pears are a delicate treat that taste as delicious as they look.



While they can be made anytime of the year, I tend to make almond pears at Christmas time as they have a definite 'festive look' about them.

A High Tea is another occasion where my Greek Almond Pears have made an appearance.

They are perfect bite size petit treats that look spectacular on a tiered cake stand. You'll also be surprised at just how easy it is to shape these little pears; it only takes one or two goes before you get the gist.



If you are into making your own gifts for Christmas, the almond can be made at least a week ahead of time.

Over the years, I have given them away as gifts for family and friends.

They have been especially appreciated by those who are gluten



intolerant.

If you would like an extra boost of almond flavour, you could add almond essence and orange water as I have pointed out in my instructions.

The cloves give that final touch, adding to the illusion that they really are 'little pears'. They also fill the house with a lovely fragrance as they are baking.

You'll just need to remind people not to eat the cloves as well!!!

Danielle

Preparation Time: 20 – 30 mins Cooking Time: 15 mins
Makes: 25 – 30

Ingredients

- 350 g (12 oz) almond meal (Note 1)
- 3/4 cup of castor sugar

- 3 egg whites, lightly beaten (Note 2)
- 25 – 30 cloves
- 1 – 2 cups icing sugar

Optional

- Replace 1 of the egg whites with 2 tbsp of orange water
 - 2 drops of almond essence
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Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 180 C/ 350 F
2. Place the almond meal and castor sugar in a medium size bowl. Mix together.
3. Make a well in the middle and add the egg whites. (Note 3). Mix to a smooth fairly stiff paste.
4. If the mixture is too sticky, add a little extra almond meal.
5. Shape 20 g (0.5 oz) of almond mixture into a ball. Place the ball in the palm of one hand and use the finger tips of the other hand to pinch the mixture so that it is narrower at the top. (Note 4)
6. Insert a clove (stem side down) into the almond pear. Place on a flat baking tray lined with baking/parchment paper. Continue with the remainder of the mixture. Place the tray on the middle or lower rack of your oven. Bake for 15 minutes or until they pears turn a light golden colour.
7. Remove from the oven. While still **hot**, transfer the pears to another tray lined with baking/parchment paper. Dust heavily with icing sugar. Alternatively, you can dip the pears into a bowl of icing sugar, turning them to make sure they are well coated.

Notes

1. Almond meal can be expensive. Recently, my local supermarket had a half price sale, so I stocked up. Look out for those sales!
2. This recipe uses medium size eggs.
3. Add the almond essence and rose water. If you do so, remember to add only 2 egg whites.
4. To ensure uniformity, I tend to weigh each little ball of mixture. If you manage it as if you are in a production line, that is, weigh all of the the mixture into 20 g (0.5 oz) pieces, roll all the pieces of mixture into balls, shape all of the balls into pears and finally add the cloves, your preparation time may be reduced.