

Old-Fashioned Dusty Treats -

Polvorones tradicionales

Ingredients (for approximately 18 pieces)

1 cup all-purpose wheat flour
¼ cup lard, at room temperature
¼ cup chopped nuts, such as walnuts or pecans
⅔ cup powdered sugar, plus more for dusting
Tissue paper, to wrap



Place lard in a mixing bowl, and beat with a wooden spatula, until creamy and fluffy; reserve. Place flour in a dry (no oil) frying pan over medium heat, stirring occasionally. It might seem like nothing changes for the first two minutes, then some steam will be produced from moisture evaporating; at that point, do not leave pan unattended, and start stirring constantly, since the flour will begin to brown rapidly. Continue cooking and stirring constantly for another minute or two, until flour looks uniformly, and just slightly, browned; remove promptly from heat to avoid burning, and continue stirring for another minute, to cool flour down. Sift through a mesh onto the reserved lard. Discard any clumps and burnt bits trapped in the mesh. Mix flour and lard together, until a sandy texture is achieved, then incorporate powdered sugar and chopped nuts. Transfer mix to a clean working surface, and continue mixing with hands for just another minute. The mix will turn a tan tone, and should look quite grainy, but clump like wet sand when gently pressed (top photo right). Use hands to bring the mix together to form a circle, then cover with plastic and continue moulding, containing the edge with one hand, and using a rolling pin to compact and smooth the circle to around 1 cm (3/8 in) in thickness (second photo right). Use a 4 cm (1.5 in) round or oval cookie cutter to cast pieces, pressing mix down with a finger before removing mould (third photo right). **Preheat oven to 325°F (160°C).** Carefully transfer cut-out pieces to a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Bake for 20 minutes, then remove from oven, and allow *polvorones* to rest in the tray, undisturbed, until they fully cool down to room temperature. They will not look too different from before baking in terms of size and colour, but the texture will look firmer. Place a mound of powdered sugar on a plate, then a *polvorón* on top, to cover the bottom with sugar. Coat the top dusting more powdered sugar through a mesh. It is better not to try to flip the treats, to avoid breaking or crumbling. Transfer to a single- or double-layered tissue paper rectangle 15x20 cm (6x8 in), as seen in the bottom photo right; fold paper over individual treat and twist side-ends to close, like a candy wrap. Repeat with all the *polvorones*. They may be stored in a container with lid at room temperature for about one week.

