



CHARLOTTE AVENT

# GEMÜTLICH

FIVE FESTIVE GERMAN COOKIE  
RECIPES FOR A COSY AND  
COMFORTING CHRISTMAS

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# GEMÜTLICH

## PLEASANT AND CHEERFUL

**Gemütlich: a cosy and comforting Christmas** is based on my Omi's favourite German biscuit recipes for the festive season. This small e-booklet wraps up five simple, delicious cookies adapted from her own traditional bakes so you can start planning and preparing for the festive season.

These recipes are simple enough so everyone in the family can join the fun, and bake these amazing delights from scratch. All these biscuits keep well, and look beautiful amongst table wreaths or hung on your tree for small hands to find on Christmas Eve – traditionally when presents are exchanged in Germany. I also love making these across one whole day, and creating a “cookie box” to give to others. I've included a small how-to within this e-booklet so you can create your own cookie box at home yourself.

I hope these recipes leave you feeling gemütlich, as my Omi would say. Pleasant and cheerful.

LOVE AT CHRISTMAS,

*Charlotte xx*



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## VANILLEKIPFERL

Enjoying these cookies is easy. Preparing them however can be tricky. Mastering the skill of shaping the delicate dough into crescents requires a little patience and learnt skill. Chances are though that even if they don't quite come out as you wished, they'll still taste incredible. I promise your shaping skills will improve over time. The name vanillekipferl literally means vanilla crescent. In Austria and Germany, the Christmas season isn't complete without a batch of vanillekipferl cookies – one of my Omi's all-time favourites and most baked recipes.

# VANILLEKIPFERL

MAKES 36 COOKIES

**300g butter, at room temperature**

**230g golden caster sugar {+ 1 sachet of Dr Oetker Vanillin zucker if you have it}**

**450g plain flour**

**230g ground almonds**

**2 vanilla bean, split and scraped**

**4tsp vanilla bean paste**

**Icing sugar to dust**

1. Split your vanilla bean and scrape the seeds into a bowl with the sugar.
2. Add the butter and whisk for 5-7 mins until pale and creamy.
3. Add your vanilla extract, whisk again then scrape down the sides of your bowl so everything is evenly mixed.
4. Add the ground almonds to the creamed butter, and sift in your flour.
5. Using a spatula or wooden spoon, beat until the mixture just comes together. It'll look crumbly and it will be. Using your hands, gently knead it in the bowl until it starts to come together as a ball. It will want to fall apart.

6. Measuring out 30g of dough, do your best to form crescent shapes. This is the tricky bit as the dough is likely to want to crumble. But persevere. Line a large baking tray with parchment and evenly space your crescents on the tray.

7. Refrigerate for at least 1hr.

8. Preheat your oven to 180C / 350F / Gas Mark 4 then bake for 15-20mins until slightly brown on top.

9. Leave to cool completely before dusting with icing sugar and serving with coffee.



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## STOLLEN BITES

My Omi's stollen loaf has always been a regular bake in our household, with the recipe passed down through generations. My mum has a knack for perfecting this loaf at Christmas, and it's perfect served for breakfast, with coffee or as an afternoon nibble in front of the fire. These stollen bites are a modernised adaptation of my Omi's traditional recipe. You can easily make them ahead of time – they'll keep for up to a fortnight if well wrapped. Then when you're ready, simply add the melted butter and icing sugar, slice and serve.

# STOLLEN BITES

MAKES ~30 BITES

**250g strong-white bread flour  
{or plain}**  
**75g ground almonds**  
**1tsp baking powder**  
**1tsp cinnamon**  
**3/4tsp kosher salt**  
**1/4tsp ground cardamom**  
**A pinch of ground cloves**  
**A pinch of allspice**  
**20ml rum**  
**110g unsalted butter, cubed, at  
room temperature**  
**125g quark, room temperature  
{or cream cheese, or cottage  
cheese}**  
**200g caster sugar**  
**Zest of 1 orange**  
**1 large egg**  
**1tsp almond extract**  
**1tsp vanilla bean paste**  
**100g natural glacé cherries,  
chopped in half**  
**50g golden raisins**  
**100g roasted pistachios**  
**225g marzipan, chopped into  
2cm pieces**  
**Melted butter and icing sugar to  
finish**

1. Preheat your oven to 180C  
{160C fan} / 350F / Gas Mark 4  
and line a 20x20cm baking tin

with parchment.

2. Sift your flour into a bowl and mix with the spices and baking powder, then add your salt.

3. In a separate bowl, beat the butter until soft and pliable then add the quark {or cream cheese, or cottage cheese} and beat again. Add your sugar and cream until pale and fluffy.

4. Once you have a smooth mixture, add the orange zest, rum, vanilla and almond extract and your egg then beat again, scraping down the sides of your bowl so everything's well incorporated.

5. Stir in the cherries, golden raisins and pistachios. Chop the marzipan into 2cm pieces and mix through.

6. Add your flour mixture in thirds, mixing after each addition until you get a soft dough.

7. Spoon the dough into your prepared tin, smoothing and levelling the top with a spatula.

8. Bake for 25-30minutes, until golden on top. Leave in the tin to cool, then, while still warm, brush generously with melted butter and leave until cold before dredging in icing sugar.



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## LEBKUCHEN

Lebkuchen are traditional German Christmas cookies that have a soft, moist and chewy texture. Traditionally made with a thin icing or chocolate ganache, Lebkuchen biscuits can be made in a variety of shaped from circles, stars or hearts. Nordicware also sell beautiful festive cookie stamps that are perfect for creating a Lebkuchen cookie that's a little different and a bit more fun! The dough is naturally stickier and wetter than most biscuit doughs, and usually a slice of apple is placed in your airtight container to keep them nice and soft.

# LEBKUCHEN

## FOR THE COOKIES

MAKES 20 COOKIES

**340ml runny honey**  
**150g dark muscovado sugar**  
**60g unsalted butter, softened**  
**2tbsp orange zest**  
**2tbsp lemon zest**  
**4 large eggs**  
**2tsp almond extract**  
**1tsp baking powder**  
**1/2tsp bicarbonate of soda**  
**550g plain flour**  
**3tsp ground ginger**  
**3tsp ground cinnamon**  
**2tsp freshly grated nutmeg**  
**1tsp ground allspice**  
**1tsp ground cloves**

## FOR THE GLAZE

**120ml water**  
**230g icing sugar, sifted**

1. Preheat your oven to 180C / 350F then line a baking tray with parchment paper.
2. In a large bowl, mix together the honey, brown sugar, butter, eggs, lemon and orange zest and almond extract with an electric whisk or stand mixer until well combined.

3. Sift in the baking powder, bicarbonate of soda, flour and spices then mix again.
4. Using a small cookie scoop, or a tablespoon, drop the dough onto the prepared baking tray.
5. Bake for 8-10 minutes – the cookies will still be soft.
6. Transfer to a wire rack and leave to cool.
7. In a small saucepan, bring the sugar and water to a boil. Let it boil for one minute, then remove from the heat and immediately whisk in the icing sugar.
8. Once your Lebkuchen have cooled completely, dip the top of your cookies in the glaze and allow to set before serving.
9. Store your Lebkuchen in an airtight container.



# ZIMTSTERNE

MAKES 35 COOKIES

**3 eggs whites**

**Pinch of salt**

**200g icing sugar, sifted**

**300g ground almonds**

**2tsp ground cinnamon**

1. Whisk the egg whites and salt with an electric whisk on high speed until stiff peaks form. Pour in the icing sugar slowly and whip for at least 7 minutes, until the mixture is glossy and stiff.

2. Put around 5 tbsp in a small bowl and set aside.

3. Fold 225g of the ground almond and the ground cinnamon into the remaining egg whites. Then add the rest of the ground almonds until you have a firm sticky dough.

**N.B.** You may not need all 300g of almonds!

4. Wrap the dough in parchment paper and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

5. Prepare two baking trays by lining them with parchment paper.

6. Unwrap the dough and place another piece of parchment paper on top, then roll it out to a thickness of 6mm.

7. Using a 5cm star-shaped cookie cutter, cut out as many stars as you can from the dough, collecting the scraps and re-rolling it until all the dough has been used up.

N.B. If you find your cutter is getting sticky, run it under cold water.

8. Place the cookies on the baking sheets.

9. Spoon the reserved meringue onto each cookie, using a toothpick to drag it out to the points.

10. Leave the cookies to sit at room temperature for 12-24 hours to dry out the meringue on top.

11. When you're ready to bake the Zimtsterne, preheat the oven to 180C / 350F.

12. Bake one tray at a time in the bottom of your oven for 3-4 minutes. You want the meringue to be set, but still nice and white.

13. Remove the baking tray from the oven and place on a wire rack. Leave them to cool completely on the tray, then store in an airtight container. They'll keep for up to a month.



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## HEIDESAND

I had to include Heidesand biscuits (pronounced hi-deh-sund) in this book, after my Mum Heide. These browned butter shortbread rounds are traditionally rolled in Hagelzucker (pearl sugar), which doesn't melt when baked. They add a nice decorative touch, but you can roll them in regular sugar and they'll taste just as good. These classic German cookies, mostly eaten during the holiday season, get their gorgeous nutty flavour from the browned butter – be patient with it and brown it low and slow. The reward will be worth it.

# HEIDESAND

MAKES 30 COOKIES

**113g unsalted butter**  
**100g golden caster sugar**  
**1tbsp whole milk**  
**1tsp vanilla extract**  
**155g plain flour**  
**1/4 tsp baking powder**  
**Pinch salt**  
**Pearl sugar for rolling**  
**{or demerara as a substitute}**

1. Melt the butter in a small saucepan over medium heat, mixing frequently until it comes to a very gentle simmer.  
**N.B.** You don't want it to boil! Browned specks will start to appear at the bottom of the pan.  
2. Whisk constantly until the the butter turns a beautiful golden brown colour. Remove from heat and let cool completely.  
3. Once cooled, pour the butter in a large mixing bowl and beat until frothy. Add the sugar, milk and vanilla extract and beat until combined.  
4. In a separate bowl, sift the the flour, baking powder and add the salt, then mix. Add the flour mixture to the melted butter and using a wooden spoon, beat until the mixture resembles coarse sand.

5. Use your hands to form a rough dough. It will be crumbly, but persevere. Turn the dough out onto a clean work surface and squish the dough to form two logs about 1-inch in diameter. This might take a while but keep working at it until they resembles logs.

6. Wrap in parchment paper, then plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight.

7. When ready to bake, preheat the oven to 180C / 350F.

8. Using a sharp knife, slice the chilled dough into 1/4 inch thick rounds. Roll the outer edges of each cookie in pearl sugar and place on a baking tray lined with parchment paper.

9. Bake for 13-15 minutes, turning the cookie sheet around halfway into it to ensure even baking, until the edges of the cookies are just browning.

10. Remove from the oven and leave the Heidesand cookies to cool for a few minutes on the tray before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.

11. Store in an airtight container for up to 1 week.



“Brown paper packages tied up with strings, these are a few of my favourite things.”

Julie Andrews My Favorite Things



## MAKE YOUR OWN COOKIE BOX

It's traditional in Germany to give beautifully packaged boxes crammed with homemade biscuits to colleagues, friends and family at Christmas. It can be hard work to bake all these cookies in one go – but the pay off is worth it. Bake all five biscuits, then package up in boxes with ribbon. This generous assortment, known as a *bunter Teller*, can be enjoyed as an afternoon tea or with coffee over the festive season. Most of these recipes use honey and not much added fat, which results in a chewier and slightly drier biscuit. Keep all the cookies fresh, soft and moist by adding a slice of apple to your storage boxes.

# MAKE YOUR OWN COOKIE BOX

## YOU'LL NEED

**A pair of scissors**  
**White cake boxes or a round tin**  
**Fairy cake cases**  
**Cellophane bags**  
**Tissue paper**  
**Festive ribbon**

Spending an entire day baking biscuits may seem extravagant, but it's a wholesome opportunity to get everyone involved, and create some beautiful cookie boxes for gifting.

**Prep well in advance.** Write down all the ingredients you'll need for all the biscuit recipes in this book and pick everything up from the store in one go.

**Check your timings.** Some of these recipes require drying out overnight, so remember to read all the recipes in this book to plan out your schedule ahead of time.

**Start baking!** Here's the fun part. Get the whole family involved.

**Allow good time for all your cookies to cool.** Make sure every

single cookie has cooled properly before bundling them into the tin.

**Choose your stacking method.** I like to use fairy cake cakes for round biscuits and bag up the stollen bites. The other biscuits you can choose to stack one on top of the other.

**Fill your tins or boxes.** I prefer to save biscuit tins across the year to fill and gift, as your biscuits will keep better in a container like this. Saying that, packaging up your biscuits in a large cake box and gifting straight away also looks beautiful.

**Wrap it up.** Cut your ribbons to size (I love using velvet ribbons around Christmas) and either tie up your cake box, or wrap your tin in tissue paper with a ribbon around the outside.

NOW IT'S TIME TO  
GIFT IT TO  
SOMEONE YOU  
LOVE!



# THANK YOU

I am so thrilled that you've signed up to my newsletter for this special free Christmas e-booklet! Producing things like this takes a lot of thought and work, but I'm pleased to be able to offer it at no cost as a gift to you this festive season. Just a small token of thanks for being here and for all your support in 2021! Remember to tag me **@acupofteaandcake** so I can see your versions of these cookies and share them to my Instagram stories. Frohes Backen!

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