



Without bizcochitos, it wouldn't be Christmas in New Mexico.

KITTY LEAKEN

6. Bake cookies in a 350° oven until slightly darker brown on the bottom, about 10 minutes (if using 1 oven, switch pan positions after 5 min.).

7. Cool on pan about 5 minutes, then transfer cookies to racks to cool. Serve, or store airtight.

Per cookie: 58 cal., 40% (23 cal.) from fat; 0.6 g protein; 2.6 g fat (1.5 g sat.); 8.4 g carbo (0.1 g fiber); 79 mg sodium; 10 mg chol.

### Bizcochitos

**Prep and cook time:** About 45 minutes

**Notes:** Butter can be used instead of

lard, but the texture and flavor of the cookies will not be as authentic. Store cookies airtight up to 3 days; freeze to store longer.

**Makes:** 9 dozen, 1½ inches wide

About 3 cups **all-purpose flour**

1½ teaspoons **baking powder**

½ teaspoon **salt**

1 cup (½ lb.) **lard**

⅔ cup plus 2 tablespoons **sugar**

¾ to 1 teaspoon **anise seed**

1 **large egg**

- ¼ cup **medium-dry sherry**, brandy, or orange juice
- 1 tablespoon **Chinese five spice** or ground cinnamon

1. Mix 3 cups flour, baking powder, and salt.
2. In a bowl, with a mixer on high speed, beat lard, ⅔ cup sugar, and anise seed until fluffy.
3. Beat in egg until blended.
4. On medium speed, mix in sherry.
5. Add dry ingredients. Stir to combine, then beat until well blended.
6. On a plate, mix remaining 2 tablespoons sugar and Chinese five spice.
7. Divide dough in half. Pat each half into a ball. On a well-floured board, roll dough, a portion at a time, ¼ inch thick. With a flour-dusted cookie cutter (plain or a simple design, about 1½ in. wide), cut dough into shapes.
8. One at a time, dip top of each cookie in spiced sugar, pressing lightly so sugar sticks. Set cookies, sugar side up, about ½ inch apart on ungreased baking sheets. Gather dough scraps into a ball, roll out, and cut more cookies.
9. Bake cookies in a 325° oven until bottoms are golden, about 10 minutes (if using 1 oven, switch pan positions after 5 min.). Transfer to racks to cool. Serve, or let cool and package airtight.

Per cookie: 40 cal., 50% (20 cal.) from fat; 0.4 g protein; 2.2 g fat (0.8 g sat.); 4.3 g carbo (0.1 g fiber); 18 mg sodium; 4 mg chol. ♦

## The party planner countdown

UP TO A MONTH AHEAD

•**Make** the chutney.

UP TO 3 DAYS AHEAD

•**Make** the posole, bean soup, ginger-snaps, and bizcochitos.

UP TO 2 DAYS AHEAD

•**Make** the sesame-nut crunch.

•**Purchase** a selection of tortilla chips, salsas, and dips, including refried beans, guacamole, and Latino creams such as crema Mexicana agría (salted sour cream) and crema Centroamericana (thick and tangy)—they're sold in Latino food markets.

•**Buy** a cooked smoked turkey or two boned smoked turkey breasts.

•**Buy** tamales from a Mexican restaurant or food market.

•**Buy** hot sauces, mustards, mayon-

naise, ingredients for the Chimayó punch and Mexican hot chocolate, and supplies for the beverage bar, such as beer, wine, soft drinks, and ice.

UP TO 1 DAY AHEAD

•**Make** the muffins.

•**Buy** sandwich breads and rolls.

PARTY DAY, IN THE MORNING

•**Set out** serving pieces and **arrange** buffets or small tables.

•**Put** hot sauces where bean soup will be served.

ABOUT 2 HOURS AHEAD

•**Arrange** sesame-nut crunch; chips, salsas, and dips; and the beverage bar.

ABOUT 1 HOUR AHEAD

•**Slowly warm** posole and bean soup,

then keep warm in tureens for guests to ladle into mugs.

•**Steam** tamales (or heat in batches in a microwave oven); keep warm in steamer until ready to serve.

•**Carve** turkey, or present whole and let guests slice portions to make into sandwiches. Accompany with the chutney, mustards, mayonnaise, and breads.

•**Assemble** Chimayó punch ingredients: Heat apple cider and keep warm. Guests ladle cider into mugs or glasses and enhance with tequila and a light touch of crème de cassis.

•**Make** Mexican hot chocolate: chop chocolate flavored with cinnamon, almonds, and sugar (sold in many supermarkets and most Latino food markets), and heat with milk. Keep warm.

•**Reheat** muffins and keep warm.

•**Set out** cookies, and as guests arrive, add any sweet house gifts—fruitcake, chocolates, or cookies.