

Sicilian Cucciddati with Figs and Almonds

Traditional Italian Fig Cookies / Cucciddati Siciliani

Prep: 30 min | **Cook:** 30 min | **Chill:** 30 min | **Total:** 1 hr 30 min (+ filling cooling) | **Yield:** 24 cookies

Traditional Sicilian Christmas pastries made with tender dough and an aromatic filling of figs, almonds, honey, orange zest and warm spices.

Ingredients

Pastry dough

- 4 cups (500 g) all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup plus 1 tbsp (120 g) granulated sugar
- 2/3 cup (150 g) margarine, softened
- 2 tbsp (40-42 g) honey
- 1 tsp vanilla extract or 1 packet Italian vanillina
- 1/3-1/2 cup (80-120 ml) water, as needed

Fig and almond filling

- 14 oz (400 g) dried figs, stems removed
- 1/2 cup (50 g) blanched almonds
- 2 tbsp (40-42 g) honey
- Finely grated zest of 1 orange
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/8 tsp ground cloves (or 2 whole cloves, removed after cooking)
- 1/4 cup (60 ml) water, plus more if needed

Decoration

- Powdered sugar, for dusting

Instructions

1. Prepare the pastry. Combine flour and sugar in a bowl. Rub in softened margarine, honey and vanilla until crumbly. Add water gradually until a smooth, soft, nonsticky dough forms. Wrap and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

2. Cook the filling. Remove fig stems. Finely chop figs and almonds. Place in a saucepan with honey, orange zest, cinnamon, cloves and 1/4 cup water. Cook over low heat, stirring, for 8-10 minutes until thick and sticky, adding a little water if needed. Remove whole cloves, if using. Cool completely.

3. Roll the dough. Heat oven to 400 F (200 C) and line a baking sheet with parchment. Roll dough on a lightly floured surface to about 1/8 inch (3-4 mm) thick. Cut into 3 x 4-inch (7.5 x 10 cm) rectangles.

4. Fill and shape. Place about 1 tbsp of filling along each rectangle center. Fold dough around filling to form a filled log; seal and place seam-side down. Cut two or three shallow decorative slits in each top. Curve into crescents if desired.

5. Bake. Arrange on the lined sheet. Bake for 25-30 minutes until lightly golden, checking from 20 minutes onward for smaller cookies.

6. Finish. Cool fully on a wire rack. Dust with powdered sugar just before serving.

Nonna's Tips

- Soak especially dry figs in warm water for 10 minutes, then drain.
- Leave almonds slightly coarse for texture.
- Always cool filling before shaping to prevent soggy dough.
- Mix the pastry only until it comes together.
- Optional: add 1 tbsp minced candied orange peel to the filling.
- The flavors often deepen after resting overnight.

Storage

Room temperature: Airtight container in a cool, dry place, up to 5-7 days. **Refrigerator:** Up to 2 weeks. **Freezer:** Freeze without powdered sugar for up to 3 months; thaw, then dust.

Nutrition (estimated per cookie; 24 cookies)

Calories	205 kcal	Total fat	7 g
Saturated fat	1.5 g	Carbohydrates	35 g
Sugars	18 g	Dietary fiber	2 g
Protein	3 g	Sodium	15 mg

Nutrition values are approximate and depend on brands and cookie size.