

Authentic Calabrian Taralli

Traditional Italian Fennel Crackers

Crunchy, rustic olive-oil taralli, briefly boiled before baking for their characteristic texture.

Prep: 35 min

Rest: 20 min

Drying: 15-30 min

Cook: 35-45 min

Total: about 1 hr 45 min-2 hr 10 min

Yield: ~40 taralli

Ingredients

- 2.2 lb (1 kg) Italian 00 flour (approximately 8 1/3 US cups; weigh for best results)
- 7 oz (200 g) extra virgin olive oil (approximately 3/4 cup plus 2 1/2 tbsp)
- 1 tbsp salt
- 2 tbsp fennel seeds (or other savory seasoning)
- Approximately 1 1/2-2 cups (355-475 ml) water, added gradually as needed

Instructions

- 1. Mix the dough** Combine the flour, salt, and fennel seeds in a large bowl. Add the extra virgin olive oil, then gradually incorporate enough water to form a smooth, firm, elastic dough that is not sticky.
- 2. Rest** Cover tightly with plastic wrap and rest at room temperature for 20 minutes.
- 3. Shape** Roll portions of dough into ropes approximately 1/2 inch (1.2 cm) thick. Cut into 4-5 inch (10-12 cm) lengths. Join the ends of each rope into a ring, pressing to seal.
- 4. Boil** Bring a large pot of water to a gentle boil. Cook the taralli in small batches. As soon as each tarallo floats to the surface, usually in 1-3 minutes, lift it out with a slotted spoon.
- 5. Dry** Place the drained taralli on a clean kitchen towel. Let air-dry about 15-30 minutes, or until no longer visibly wet.
- 6. Bake** Preheat a conventional/static oven to 480°F (250°C). Arrange taralli on a lightly oiled baking tray or parchment rated for this temperature. Bake approximately 20-25 minutes, checking earlier for smaller taralli, until golden brown and crisp. Cool completely on a rack.

Nonna's Tips

- Use high-quality extra virgin olive oil for the most authentic flavor.
- Keep the dough firm; add water slowly and only as needed.
- Do not skip boiling or drying: both help develop the characteristic crunch.
- Baking times vary with size and oven. Check frequently at 480°F.
- Cool fully before storing in an airtight container.

Flavor Variations

Replace fennel with black pepper, finely chopped rosemary, dried oregano, or crushed Calabrian chili pepper.

Storage

Store completely cooled taralli in an airtight container in a cool, dry place for approximately 1-2 weeks. Freeze up to 2 months, if desired.

Nutrition Facts (Estimated)

Per tarallo, based on approximately 40 taralli per batch. Actual values vary by ingredients and size.

Calories	135 kcal	Total Fat	5.2 g
Saturated Fat	0.7 g	Carbohydrates	19.3 g
Fiber	0.8 g	Sugars	0.1 g
Protein	2.7 g	Sodium	180 mg
Cholesterol	0 mg		