



Sugar-Spared Pecan Shortbread Christmas Bites

A Better Kind of Sweet

Let's talk about sugar. I use Sucanat in these bites. It is just dried cane juice. It keeps its molasses goodness. That gives a deep, warm taste. It is not as sharp as white sugar.

Your body reads it differently, too. It matters because it makes a gentler treat. You still get that sweet joy. But without the big rush. Your family might not even notice the swap. I love little tricks like that.

The Heart of the Cookie

Pecans are the star here. You must save the prettiest halves for the top.

It is like choosing jewels for a crown. The rest get ground right into the dough. This makes every bite nutty and rich.

Fun fact: Pecans are the only major tree nut that grew here first. They are truly American! I think that is wonderful. Do you have a favorite nut for baking? Mine will always be pecans. They just feel like home.

My Log-Rolling Lesson

Now, you will roll the dough into logs. I still laugh at this. The first time I did it, my log looked like a crooked little snake. Do not worry if yours is not perfect. The secret is the tall glass.

You pop the wrapped log right in. It chills upright. This keeps it nice and round. It matters because round logs make pretty, even cookies. And pretty cookies taste better. We eat with our eyes first, you know.

A Sniff of Christmas Past

When these bake, your kitchen will smell like magic. Cinnamon and nutmeg fill the air. Doesn't that smell amazing? It takes me right back to my grandmother's house. She always had a tin of spiced cookies on her table.

That is the power of smell and spice. It matters because it weaves a memory. These bites are not just food. They are a little piece of warmth and history. What smell makes you think of a happy time?

The Final, Gentle Press

Slice your chilled log. Brush each cookie with egg white. Then, press a saved pecan half right in the center. Be gentle. You are just setting it in

place. This step makes each one special.

Bake them until the edges just blush with gold. Let them cool completely on the sheet. This makes them crisp. It is worth the wait. I promise. Will you be leaving these out for Santa this year? I think he would approve.

Ingredients:

Ingredient	Amount	Notes
Sucanat	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup (4 ounces/113 grams)	Ground fine in a spice grinder
Pecans	1 cup	40 halves reserved for garnish; remainder coarsely ground
Unsalted butter	8 tablespoons	Melted and cooled
Large egg yolks	2	
Water	2 tablespoons	For the dough
Vanilla extract	2 teaspoons	
All-purpose flour	$2\frac{1}{4}$ cups (11 $\frac{1}{4}$ ounces/319 grams)	
Ground cinnamon	1 teaspoon	
Salt	$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon	
Ground nutmeg	$\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon	
Egg white wash	1 large egg white + 2 tbsp water	Mixed together for brushing cookies



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Instructions

Step 1: First, let's get our Sucanat nice and powdery. Grind it in a spice grinder in three small batches. It takes about a minute. Now, pick out 40 of your prettiest pecan halves. Set them aside for later. In a bowl, whisk the melted butter, egg yolks, water, and vanilla. Doesn't that smell amazing already? (A clean, dry spice grinder works best for this job.)

See also [Maple Glazed Roast Turkey Breast for Christmas](#)

Step 2: Next, put the rest of the pecans in your food processor. Pulse them until they look like coarse crumbs. Add the powdery Sucanat, flour, cinnamon, salt, and nutmeg. Give it a quick process to mix. Now, keep the machine running. Slowly pour in your butter mixture. Watch the dough magically come together! I still laugh at that part.

Step 3: Turn the dough out onto your counter. Knead it gently until it feels smooth. Then, split it into two equal pieces. Roll each piece into a log, about as thick as a jar of jam. Wrap each log tightly in plastic wrap. Stand them up in a tall glass in the fridge. They need to chill for at least two hours. **What's the best way to keep your dough log round?**

Share below!

Step 4: Time to bake! Heat your oven to 325 degrees. Line your baking sheets. Take one log from the fridge. Slice it into cookies about as thick as a pencil. Turn the log as you slice to keep it round. Place them on the sheet. Whisk one egg white with two tablespoons of water. Brush a little on each cookie. Gently press a saved pecan half right in the center of each one.

Step 5: Bake one sheet at a time for 16 to 19 minutes. Rotate the sheet halfway through. You'll know they're done when the edges just start to turn golden. Let them cool completely on the sheet. They get nice and crisp as they cool. (This patience is the hardest part, but it's worth it!) Now, pour some milk and enjoy your creation.

Creative Twists

These little bites are wonderful as they are. But sometimes, a little change is fun. You could add a tiny pinch of orange zest to the dough. It smells like Christmas morning. Or, try a drizzle of dark chocolate over the cooled cookies. Just a little zig-zag looks so pretty. For a cozy flavor, swap the nutmeg for a pinch of ground cardamom. It's a lovely surprise. Which one would you try first? Comment below!

See also Crispy Buttery Roasted Christmas Potatoes

Serving & Pairing Ideas

I love serving these on a big platter with other cookies. They look so festive. A small bowl of tart cranberry jam for dipping is lovely. The sweet and tart flavors dance together. For a drink, a warm cup of spiced apple cider is perfect. For the grown-ups, a small glass of sherry or port wine pairs beautifully. It's a very old-fashioned and cozy combination. Which would you choose tonight?



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Keeping Your Christmas Bites Merry & Bright

These shortbread bites stay fresh for days. Just store them in a tin at room temperature. For longer joy, freeze the dough logs or baked cookies. Wrap the logs well in plastic wrap. They can wait in your freezer for a month.

I love making the dough ahead. It makes holiday baking so calm. I remember my first time. I baked all the cookies at once and they went stale. Now I slice and bake just one log at a time. Fresh cookies anytime!

Batch cooking like this saves your energy. It means more time for stories by the fire. Your future self will thank you on a busy day. **Have you ever tried storing cookie dough this way? Share below!**

Simple Fixes for Common Cookie Troubles

Is your dough too crumbly? It just needs a gentle knead. Use the warmth of your hands. Press it together on the counter until it is smooth. I once added too much flour. A tiny splash of water fixed it right up.

Do your cookies spread too much? Your dough logs might be too warm. Chilling the dough firm is the secret. It helps the cookies keep their pretty shape. This matters for looks and that perfect shortbread bite.

Are the nuts burning? Always use your middle oven rack. Rotate the sheet halfway through baking. This gives every cookie an even, golden

tan. Good technique builds your kitchen confidence. **Which of these problems have you run into before?**

Your Quick Questions, Answered

Q: Can I make these gluten-free? A: Yes! Use a good gluten-free flour blend. I find the 1-to-1 kinds work best here.

Q: How far ahead can I make them? A: The dough logs wait in the fridge for 2 days. You can also freeze them for a month.

Q: What if I don't have Sucanat? A: Regular brown sugar works fine. The flavor will be a little different, but still lovely.

See also [Frosted Apple Crumble Noel](#)

Q: Can I double the recipe? A: Absolutely. Just make the dough in two separate batches. It is easier for your food processor.

Q: Any optional tips? A: A pinch of orange zest in the dough is wonderful. *Fun fact: The nutmeg is my secret. It makes the kitchen smell like Christmas.* **Which tip will you try first?**

From My Kitchen to Yours

I hope these little bites bring sweetness to your home. Baking is about sharing warmth and making memories. I would love to see your creations. Your kitchen stories are my favorite thing to hear.

Have you tried this recipe? Tag us on Pinterest
@ElowensKitchenNook! I will look for your photos. Thank you for baking with me today.



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Happy cooking!
—Elowen Thorn.



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Sugar-Spared Pecan Shortbread Christmas Bites

Author: Elowen Thorn

Cooking Method:[Baking](#)



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Cuisine:[American](#)

Courses:[Dessert Snack](#)



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Difficulty: **Beginner**

Prep time: **30 minutes**



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Cook time: **19 minutes**

Rest time:**2 hours**

Total time: **2 hours 49 minutes**



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Servings: **40 servings**



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Calories: **80 kcal**

Best Season: Summer

Description

Enjoy these festive, buttery shortbread bites sweetened with Sucanat

and studded with pecan halves. A perfect sugar-spared holiday treat.

Ingredients

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (4 ounces/113 grams) Sucanat
- 1 cup pecans
- 8 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted and cooled
- 2 large egg yolks
- 2 tablespoons water
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups (11 $\frac{1}{4}$ ounces/319 grams) all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 large egg white mixed with 2 tablespoons water

Instructions

1. Working in 3 batches, grind Sucanat in spice grinder until fine and powdery, about 1 minute. Reserve 40 prettiest pecan halves for garnishing. Whisk melted butter, egg yolks, water, and vanilla in bowl until combined.
2. Process remaining pecans in food processor until nuts are coarsely ground, about 20 seconds. Add ground Sucanat, flour, cinnamon, salt, and nutmeg and process until combined, about 10 seconds. With processor running, add butter mixture and process until dough comes together, about 25 seconds.
3. Transfer dough to clean counter, knead until smooth and cohesive, and divide into 2 equal pieces. Roll each piece of dough into 6-inch log, about 2 inches thick. Wrap each log tightly in plastic wrap and place upright in tall drinking glass. Refrigerate until firm, at least 2

hours or up to 2 days.

4. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 325 degrees. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Working with 1 log of dough at a time, slice into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-thick cookies, turning log every few slices to prevent sides from flattening, and space $\frac{3}{4}$ inch apart on prepared sheets. Brush cookies with egg white mixture, then gently press reserved pecan halves into center of each cookie.
5. Bake, 1 sheet at a time, until edges of cookies are beginning to brown and set, 16 to 19 minutes, rotating sheet halfway through baking. Let cookies cool completely on sheet. Serve.

Notes

Nutrition information is approximate and based on one cookie.

Sugar: 3 grams (down from 5).

Keywords: Shortbread, Pecan, Christmas, Cookies, Sugar-Spared, Holiday