Polvorones (Spanish crumbly almond cookies)

A classic Spanish shortbread-style cookie that's tender, powdery, and lightly spiced—perfect for gifting or a quiet coffee moment.

Makes about 20-30 cookies
Prep Time: 25 min / Cook Time: 12-18 min / Inactive (chilling) Time: 30-60 min

Ingredients

1½ C all-purpose flour, toasted until pale golden
¾ C blanched almonds, toasted and finely ground
½ C lard or butter, at room temperature
¾ C granulated sugar
½ t ground cinnamon
1 t kosher salt
Powdered sugar for dusting after baking

Method

Preheat oven to 300°F and spread the all-purpose flour in a thin, even layer on a baking sheet. Toast the flour in the oven, stirring every 8–10 minutes, until it turns a pale golden color and smells nutty; cool completely.
Toast blanched almonds on a separate sheet until lightly golden; cool and grind to a fine meal in a food processor.
Beat lard or butter with granulated sugar and ground cinnamon until smooth and creamy.
Sift the cooled toasted flour into the butter mixture, add ground almonds and kosher salt, and fold gently until a crumbly dough forms; press together lightly—do not overwork.
Wrap the dough and chill 30–60 minutes so it firms and is easier to shape.
Roll or press the dough to about ½ inch thickness on a lightly floured surface and cut into rounds or ovals; transfer carefully to a parchment-lined baking sheet.
Bake at 350°F until the edges just begin to color, about 12–18 minutes depending on size; cool completely on the sheet to avoid breaking.
When fully cool, dust generously with powdered sugar and store in an airtight tin once the sugar has set.
Notes, variations, and tradeoffs

- **Fat choice** — lard gives the most traditional crumbly texture and authentic flavor; butter yields a slightly richer, more familiar shortbread note.
- **Flavor variations** — add lemon or orange zest for *polvorones de limón*, or swap some almond for hazelnut for a different nutty profile.
- **Texture control** — to keep cookies tender and powdery, avoid over-mixing and do not remove them from the baking sheet while warm.
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Note:
Store cooled polvorones in an airtight container layered with parchment at room temperature for up to 2 weeks; they taste even better after a day when flavors settle!
Great with strong coffee!