Almond-filled, Honey-drenched Crescents
Travados

Travados are crescent-shaped almond and spice-filled biscuits, soaked in a hot honey syrup and sprinkled with toasted sesame seeds. The honey-drenched travados keep well in an airtight container for a week and are delicious with coffee or tea or as that sweet something after a meal. These irresistible nutty indulgences are particularly popular at all celebrations, especially at the religious festivals of Purim and the New Year and at the meal to break the Fast of Yom Kippur.

For the filling:
250g (9oz) unblanched almonds, lightly toasted
1 tbsp fresh orange juice or water
½ cup clear honey
1½ tbsp brandy, preferably Greek Metaxa
1 tsp ground cinnamon
½ tsp ground cloves
1 heaped tbsp sesame seeds, lightly toasted

For the dough:
1 cup vegetable oil
½ cup caster (superfine) sugar
¾ cup water
3¼ cups cake flour, plus extra for dusting
1 level tsp baking powder

For the syrup:
½ cup sugar
1 cup clear honey
½ cup water
a 2.5cm (1in) strip orange zest
1 tsp fresh lemon juice
1 tbsp orange blossom water

For the topping:
½ cup toasted sesame seeds or finely ground unblanched almonds

Prepare the filling: Pulse the almonds in a food processor until they are coarsely ground. In a bowl combine the rest of the filling ingredients, add the almonds and mix to a paste that is quite soft to the touch.

Prepare the dough: Combine the oil, sugar and water in a bowl. Add the flour and baking powder a little at a time. Mix, without kneading, to form a soft, pliable dough. If
it seems too oily add a little more flour. Do not overwork the dough. Let it rest for 5 minutes at room temperature.

**Preheat** the oven to 180°C (350°F). Line two baking trays with baking paper.

**Make** the biscuits: Pinch off 40 walnut-sized pieces of dough and roll into smooth balls. Flatten each ball between your palms to make discs about 3mm (⅛in) thick. Place each disc on a lightly floured work surface and create a ridged pattern by gently pressing the tines of a fork on one side of the pastry. Turn the discs over and place 1 heaped teaspoon of the prepared paste in the centre. Fold over and press the edges with your fingers to seal, and curve the pastries slightly into half-moon crescent shapes. Repeat the rolling, filling and shaping of the pastry until all the filling has been used. Place the biscuits on the prepared baking trays and bake for 30 minutes or until lightly golden. Cool on wire racks.

**Make** the syrup: Combine the sugar, honey, water and orange zest strip in a small pan and bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Reduce the heat and simmer, uncovered, without stirring, for 5 minutes. Add the lemon juice and orange blossom water and simmer until the syrup has thickened slightly and the short-thread stage is reached*. Discard the strip of orange zest.

**Turn** the heat down to the lowest setting. Gently drop a few biscuits at a time into the hot syrup and use a spoon to submerge them for 2 minutes to absorb the syrup. Scoop them out with a slotted spoon and place the syrup-drenched *travados* in a large, deep heatproof dish, in a single layer. Ladle the remaining syrup over the biscuits and sprinkle with sesame seeds or coat with finely ground unblanched almonds. Makes about 40.

**Twist on Tradition:**
- You may prefer less sweet, drier *travados*. If so, simply serve the baked biscuits sprinkled with icing (confectioner’s) sugar.

**Stella’s Hints:**
- To freeze baked *travados*: Place the *travados* between layers of baking paper in an airtight container and freeze for up to 2 months. To serve, defrost and crisp in a 180°C (350°F) preheated oven for 5 minutes. Then proceed with the honey syrup.
- *Short-thread stage:* At this stage, the hot syrup is thick and sticky. You test it by placing a small amount onto a teaspoon. Dip wetted thumb and index finger in the syrup and pull them apart a couple of times to see if threads of about 1.5cm (½in) in length form.