

November Spice Club: **BLACK SESAME**



Suggested Reading

available to request on the Minerva catalog or cloudLibrary app

Irvin F. Lin, *Marbled, Swirled, and Layered: 150 Recipes and Variations for Artful Bars, Cookies, Pies, Cakes, and more*

Faye Levy, *Feast from the Mideast: 250 Sun-Drenched Dishes from the Lands of the Bible*

Noor Murad & Yotam Ottolenghi, *Ottolenghi Test Kitchen: Shelf Love*

Katarina Cermelj, *Baked to Perfection: Delicious Gluten-Free Recipes with a Pinch of Science*

Sami Tamimi & Tara Wigley, *Falastin: A Cookbook*

Editors of Food & Wine, *Desserts*

Yotam Ottolenghi, Helen Goh, & Tara Wigley, *Sweet: Desserts from London's Ottolenghi*

Black Sesame

Black sesame – what’s the deal? Black and white sesame are the same plant seeds but are kept intact and unhulled, as in the case of black sesame, or have their outer seed casing removed and are sold as hulled white sesame. Expect a pleasant nuttiness from both varieties, but black sesame is bolder, crunchier, and more fragrant, especially when toasted for a few minutes in a warm pan. They are also a good source of healthy monosaturated and polyunsaturated fats, and contain trace minerals like iron, copper, and manganese that are important for one’s metabolism and immune system.

While the sesame plant may be native to Indonesia, records show their usage in cooking and as a coloring agent for block ink in China some 5,000 years ago. Historically, black sesame was transported along the Silk Road to Africa and Europe, and over time to the US and world at large. While our initial recipe search didn’t turn up many savory options, the use of black sesame seeds is common in Middle Eastern and Asian cuisines. Black sesame is currently enjoying some global popularity in bakes and sweets, and cooks can enhance the appearance of all manner of salad, vegetable, noodle and rice dishes with this striking garnish. These organic black sesame seeds were bought at Frontier Co-Op; best by 2025.

*Enjoy authentic Middle Eastern & Asian cuisine
at these local joints:*

Evo Kitchen + Bar (Portland)

Nura Hummus and Falafel (Portland)

Mazzat (Portland)

Falafel Time (Portland)

Dina’s Cuisine (Portland)

Kon Asian Bistro (Portland)

Tao Yuan (Brunswick)

Thai Garden Restaurant (Freeport)

Sichuan Kitchen (Portland)

Jing Yan (Portland)

Tahini Cookies

Katarina Cermelj, *Baked to Perfection: Delicious Gluten-Free Recipes with a Hint of Science*

“Crispy around the edges, chewy in the middle and delicious all over. [...] In this recipe, tahini gives an incredible depth of flavor, and a coating of sesame seeds makes the cookies as pretty as they are delicious.” **Note:** if translating grams to cups, be aware that ingredient weight varies!

100g tahini paste
95g maple syrup or runny honey
½ teaspoon vanilla bean paste
¼ teaspoon baking soda
¼ teaspoon salt
100g almond flour
3 tablespoons white sesame seeds
2 tablespoons black sesame seeds

Line two baking sheets with baking paper.

In a bowl, mix together all the ingredients except the seeds until they come together into a smooth dough.

In a separate small bowl, mix together the white and black sesame seeds to combine.

Shape 1 tablespoon of the cookie dough into a ball, roll it in the sesame-seed mixture and place it on a lined baking sheet. Using a flat bottom of a glass or measuring cup, gently press down on the cookie ball until it's about 7-8mm thick.

Repeat with the remaining dough until you have 14 cookies, then refrigerate for about 15 minutes. While the cookies are chilling, adjust the oven shelf to the middle position and preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F).

One baking sheet at a time, bake the cookies for about 8 minutes or until slightly spread out and light golden brown on top.

Immediately out of the oven, the cookies will be very soft. Allow them to cool on the baking sheets for about 10 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely. Store up to 1 week in an airtight container at room temperature.

Put a twist on it: make chocolate tahini cookies by adding 15g Dutch processed cocoa powder to the cookie dough.

Tahini Scallion Rolls

King Arthur Test Kitchen, KingArthurBaking.com

“Cinnamon rolls go savory in this updated take on swirled buns. The scallions add an onion-y sharpness, which is balanced by the chewiness, and the overall presentation is strikingly pretty. These can be on the table in just about 2 hours. Enjoy any day of the week like we do: with a spoonful of chili crisp on top.”

DOUGH	1 cup water, lukewarm
	2 ¼ teaspoons instant yeast or active dry yeast
	1 ½ teaspoons salt
	1 tablespoon granulated sugar
	2 tablespoons sesame oil
	2 ½ - 2 ¾ cups King Arthur Unbleached Bread Flour
	2 tablespoons potato flour or ¼ cup dried potato flakes (instant mashed potatoes)
FILLING	¼ cup tahini
	1 tablespoon honey
	¼ cup sesame seeds
	⅛ teaspoon salt
	1 ¼ cups scallions, sliced
GARNISH	2 tablespoons water, for brushing
	2 tablespoons sesame seeds, white and black
	chili crisp, for serving (optional)

To make the dough:

In a large bowl or bucket of your bread machine set on the dough cycle, combine the water, yeast, salt, sugar and sesame oil.

Whisk together 1 cup of the flour with the potato flour or potato flakes, and add to the water mixture.

Add the remaining flour and mix until a soft dough forms (or start your bread machine). Knead the dough for 6 minutes in a mixer (with the dough hook) at medium speed, or 8-10 minutes by hand; it should be quite soft but not stick to your finger when lightly touched. Adjust the dough's consistency by kneading in water or flour by the tablespoon as needed.

Cover the bowl and let the dough rise for 45-60 minutes, or until doubled. If using a bread machine, simply let it finish its cycle after checking the dough's consistency.

(recipe continued next page)

To make the filling:

Mix together the tahini, honey, sesame seeds, and salt. Stir in the scallions.

To shape the rolls:

Deflate the dough and roll it on a lightly floured surface into a 10" x 16" rectangle. Spread the filling over the dough, leaving 1/2" on each of the long sides bare. Roll the dough up from the long side and pinch the edges together.

Using a sharp knife or dental floss, slice the dough into 12 pieces. Space the rolls, cut side up, on a parchment-lined baking sheet or in a 9" x 13" pan. The rolls may seem delicate at this point; that's OK. Cover with greased plastic wrap and let them rise for 20 minutes while you preheat your oven to 350°F.

Once the rolls are puffy, brush the tops with water and sprinkle with the black and white sesame seeds.

Bake the rolls for 20 to 25 minutes, until golden brown. Remove them from the oven and serve warm, topped with chili crisp as desired. Store rolls well-wrapped at room temperature for a couple of days; freeze for longer storage.