

Bonne Seed Cookies

*B*onne seed is another name for sesame seed.

This is an old favorite low-country recipe given to my friend Martha Nesbit by a Savannah caterer, the late Sally Sullivan.

It makes dozens of tiny, crisp brown-sugar cookies about the size of a quarter. For a sweet gift, fill an oversize teacup or mug with cookies, wrap in cellophane, and tie it with a beautiful ribbon. Present it with a special tea (there are wonderful specialty Christmas teas available at this time of year).

- 1½ cups sesame seeds
- One 1-pound package light brown sugar (2½ cups, packed)
- 1½ cups (3 sticks) butter, softened
- 2 large eggs
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. If you're using raw sesame seeds, place the seeds in a single layer on a baking sheet. Place in the oven for

about 5 minutes, watching carefully. They should just begin to lightly brown. Set aside to cool completely.

3. Lower the oven temperature to 300°F. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper.

4. Using an electric mixer, cream the sugar, butter, and eggs until very light, about 5 minutes. Sift the flour, baking powder, and salt. Add to the butter mixture and stir with a spatula until combined. Add the vanilla. Stir in the cooled sesame seeds. Drop the batter by ¼ teaspoonfuls onto the prepared cookie sheets, 1 inch apart. It takes just a dab of batter to produce quarter-size cookies. They will spread into perfect circles during baking.

4. Bake until very brown but not burned at the edges, 14 to 15 minutes. *Important:* Let the cookies cool completely on the parchment paper, then peel them away from the paper. Store between layers of waxed paper in an airtight container. These cookies freeze well in tins. They will crumble in a plastic freezer bag.

MAKES ABOUT 12 COOKIES