

Holiday Kitchen



Gingerbread Cut Out Cookies

Makes about 3 to 3 1/2 dozen 3" cookies

Ingredients:

12 tbsp unsalted butter
 3/4 cup light brown sugar, packed
 3/4 cup molasses
 1 tsp kosher salt
 2 tsp cinnamon
 2 tsp ginger
 1/4 tsp allspice or cloves

1 large egg
 1 tsp baking powder
 1/2 tsp baking soda
 3 3/4 cups all-purpose flour

For the royal icing:

3 large egg whites
 4 cups powdered sugar, sifted
 natural food coloring

Instructions:

In a saucepan set over low heat, or in the microwave, melt butter, then stir in the brown sugar, molasses, salt, and spices. Stir until completely combined.

Transfer the molasses mixture to a medium-sized mixing bowl and let it cool to lukewarm. (Use your finger to gauge the heat.) When it's a bit cooler than body temperature, beat in the egg until no streaks are visible.

In a small bowl, whisk together the baking powder, baking soda and flour. Then, and stir these dry ingredients into the molasses mixture with a rubber spatula. Make sure to mix until no dry spots are visible.

The dough will be very soft and sticky, but don't be tempted to add more flour; it'll firm up once it's chilled!

Lightly flour a work surface and divide the gingerbread dough in half. Pat each half into a thick rectangle on the work surface. Then, wrap the gingerbread dough rectangles well and refrigerate for 1 hour or longer. The dough may be sticky and hard to roll if not thoroughly chilled, so make sure it's cold before continuing!

When your dough is nice and chilled, and rather firm, preheat your oven to 350°F. Get out 2-3 baking sheets and line them with parchment baking paper.

Remove one rectangle of dough from the refrigerator, and again, lightly flour a clean work surface. Roll the dough 1/8" to 1/4" thick; the thinner you roll the dough, the crispier the cookies will be. Lightly flour both the top and bottom of the dough if it starts to stick, brushing off excess mounds of flour should they develop.

Cut out shapes with a floured cookie cutter, cutting them as close to one another as possible to minimize waste.

Dip your cookie cutters in a bit of flour then cut out cookie shapes. Place the cookies on the prepared parchment paper lined sheet pans. Transfer the pans to the oven and bake until they're just barely brown around the edges - roughly 8-12 minutes. Allow the cookies to cool 10-15 minutes on the baking sheets, then transfer them to a wire rack to cool completely before decorating. Repeat the cut-out process with remaining dough.

While your cookies are cooling, make royal icing. In the clean bowl of the stand mixer, whip the egg whites until frothy. Add the powdered sugar and mix on medium low speed until the frosting is thick and shiny - about 3-5 minutes. If you wish to make several colors of frosting, divide the frosting between bowls and color to your liking. Add water little by little to achieve a consistency that is easy to pipe, spread or fill.

Decorate the cookies according to your liking, and allow the royal icing to set before storing cookies in an airtight container at room temperature. Enjoy through your celebrating + merry making!

Special thanks to our local Chef Lentine Alexis for help in creating this recipe and video for 2020's Painted Prairie Holidays. For more delicious recipes visit her website at www.lentinealexis.com.

