

Gingerbread Cookies

Courtesy of Cris Mckone

4 c. unbleached, all-purpose flour
1 T. ground ginger
2 t. ground cinnamon
1 t. salt
1/2 t. grated nutmeg
1/2 t. ground cloves
1/2 t. baking soda
1/2 lb. unsalted butter, room temperature
2/3 c. light or dark brown sugar
2 large eggs
2/3 c. unsulfured molasses

Add the dry ingredients (except sugar) to a mixing bowl and stir well. Beat the butter and sugar until fluffy, then add one egg at a time. Continue beating until the mixture is smooth. Beat in half the flour mixture, then scrape the bowl and beaters. Beat in the molasses and scrape again. Beat in the remaining flour mixture, until just combined. Divide the dough into several pieces and press each piece between 2 sheets of plastic wrap into a rectangle about 1/4 inch thick. Chill the dough for at least one hour or until firm. Set the racks in the middle upper third of the oven and preheat to 350°F.

Roll the dough, one piece at a time, on a floured surface, just to make the dough flat and even, but not much thinner. Cut with floured cutters and arrange the cookies on the pans an inch or two apart. Repeat with the remaining dough. Re-roll the scraps immediately or press together, chill and re-roll later. Bake the cookies for about 10 minutes, until firm when pressed with a fingertip. Cool the cookies on the pans. When cool, decorate with royal icing, powdered sugar or melted chocolate. Makes about 40 large cookies.