



Gingerbread Men Cookies

(English spiced Christmas cookies)

Spiced breads have been popular in Europe reaching back to the time of the ancient Romans and Greeks. Germans have their *lebkuchen* and gingerbread houses. The English have traditionally shaped ginger-scented dough into men, animals and Father Christmas for the holidays. This recipe is always a favorite with kids.

Makes about 2 dozen cookies

Ingredients

- Flour -- 3 cups
- Ground ginger -- 1 tablespoon
- Ground cinnamon -- 1 tablespoon
- Ground cloves -- 1 teaspoon
- Baking soda -- 1 teaspoon
- Salt -- 1 teaspoon
- Butter, cut into pieces -- 12 tablespoons (1 1/2 sticks)
- Dark brown sugar -- 3/4 cup
- Molasses or treacle -- 3/4 cup
- Milk -- 2 tablespoons or as needed

Method

1. Sift the flour, ginger, cinnamon, cloves, baking soda and salt together into a large bowl. Fit a mixer with a paddle attachment. Add the butter and brown sugar and beat until light and fluffy. Reduce speed to low and add the molasses and 2 tablespoons of milk, beating until incorporated.
2. With the mixer still running on low, add the dry ingredients in batches, beating just until the ingredients come together in a soft dough. Add more milk a few drops at a time if necessary to bring the ingredients together.
3. Divide the dough into two equal portions and flatten them out into discs. Wrap with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 2 hours.
4. Preheat oven to 350°F. Place the chilled discs on a floured work surface and roll each out to 1/4-inch thick. Use cookie cutters to cut the dough into shapes.

5. Place the cookies on a baking sheet that has been greased or lined with parchment paper, leaving about 1 inch space between the cookies. Poke
6. a hole in the top of the cookie with a skewer if you will be hanging them as decorations.
7. Bake the cookies until they are firm and beginning to brown around the edges, 10 to 12 minutes. Remove from oven and let rest five minutes. Then remove to wire rack and cool completely.
8. Decorate as desired with a simple icing.

Variations

- **Simple Sugar Icing for Decoration:** 1 cup powdered (confectioner's) sugar, 1 to 2 teaspoons lemon juice, a few drops of food coloring if you like. Mix all the ingredients together to make a smooth, free-flowing paste. Place in a piping bag and pipe onto cookies with a small tip.
- Press raisins, currants, candies, dragées or sprinkles into the cookies before baking them for a nice decorative effect.
- Many recipes substitute 1 beaten egg for the milk.