



GINGERBREAD MEN COOKIES

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| 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, softened | 2 teaspoons ground ginger |
| 1 cup firmly packed light brown sugar | 1 ½ teaspoons baking soda |
| 1 large egg | 1 ¼ teaspoon cinnamon |
| 1 cup dark molasses | 1 teaspoon ground cloves |
| 2 tablespoons cider vinegar | ½ teaspoon salt |
| 5 cups all-purpose flour | Sugar icing, optional, recipe follows |

In a large bowl, with an electric mixer, cream the butter, add the sugar and beat the mixture until fluffy. Beat in the egg, molasses and vinegar. In another bowl, sift together the flour, ginger, baking soda, cinnamon, cloves and salt. Stir the mixture into the butter mixture, a little at a time. The dough will be soft. Divide the dough into fourths, dust it with flour and wrap each piece in waxed paper. Flatten the dough slightly and chill it for at least 3 hours or overnight.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Roll out the dough, 1 piece at a time, ¼ inch thick on a floured surface and cut out cookies with a 4 inch gingerbread man cutter dipped in flour. Transfer the cookies with a spatula to buttered baking sheets, arranging them 2 inches apart and bake them in the oven for 6 to 8 minutes or until no imprint remains when they are touched lightly with a fingertip. Transfer the cookies with the spatula to racks and let them cool. Pipe the sugar icing decoratively on the cookie using a pastry bag fitted with a small decorative tip. Let the cookies stand for 20 minutes, or until the icing is set.

SUGAR ICING

- 2 large egg whites
- 1 pinch cream of tartar
- 1 pinch of salt
- 2 teaspoons water
- 3 cups confectioners sugar, sifted
- food coloring, optional

In a large bowl with an electric mixer beat the egg whites with the cream of tartar, a pinch of salt, and 2 teaspoons water until the mixture is frothy. Beat in the sugar a little at a time and beat the mixture until it holds stiff peaks. Beat in the food coloring, if desired. Decorate baked cookies using a spatula or pastry bag fitted with a small decorative tip and let the cookies stand for 20 minutes, or until the icing is set. Yield: icing for about 50 (4 inch) cookies.

recipe via foodnetwork.com



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