

Ginger People

Holiday Cookies | December 2005/January 2006



Rebecca Rather, owner of the Rather Sweet Bakery & Café in Texas Hill Country, has a holiday gingerbread cookie recipe for making gingerbread-people ornaments from this spiced dough by pricking a hole in the top of each cookie with a chopstick before baking.

- 1 CUP GRANULATED SUGAR
- 1/2 CUP FULL-FLAVORED MOLASSES
- 1/2 CUP WATER
- 1 TBSP. GROUND GINGER
- 2 TSP. GROUND CINNAMON
- 1 TSP. GROUND CLOVES
- 1 CUP UNSALTED BUTTER
- 4 CUPS ALL-PURPOSE FLOUR
- 1 1/2 TSP. BAKING SODA
- 1/4 TSP. SALT

In a large saucepan, stir together granulated sugar, molasses, water, ginger, cinnamon, and cloves. Bring to a boil, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Remove the pan from the heat and add the butter, stirring occasionally until melted. Let cool 15 minutes.

In a large bowl stir together flour, baking soda, and salt. Add the flour mixture to the mixture in the saucepan. Mix with a wooden spoon until completely combined. Spoon the dough into a gallon-size resealable plastic bag. Flatten the dough to an even thickness and seal. Refrigerate 6 hours to overnight.

Remove dough from bag; divide into 4 portions. Roll out 1 portion at a time, storing remainder of the dough in refrigerator while you work. On a lightly floured surface, roll out the chilled dough to 1/4-inch thickness. Cut out the cookies with 4- to 6-inch gingerbread-people cookie cutters. Use a spatula to move the cookies onto ungreased cookie sheets, spacing them 1 inch apart. Combine the dough scraps and reroll the dough to cut out more cookies. Roll any subsequent scraps into a thick log, wrap it in plastic wrap, and freeze for 10 minutes or until firm. Use a sharp knife to cut 1/4-inch-thick rounds off the log to make round cookies. (Reroll the scraps only once, or the cookies will become tough from overhandling.)

Bake cookies in a 375° oven 10 to 12 minutes or until firm. Cool cookies on cookie sheets 5 minutes before transferring to racks to cool.

Decorate the cooled gingerbread cookies as desired. Makes about 20 cookies.

Recipe reprinted from *The Pastry Queen: Royally Good Recipes from the Texas Hill Country's Rather Sweet Bakery & Cafe* by Rebecca Rather, published by Ten Speed Press.