

Chuck's Molasses Cookies

These spicy cookies are perfect for the holidays. Cut out into snowflake shapes, the cookies can be artfully decorated with white royal icing, sugars and glitters.

Ingredients:

2 cups all-purpose flour
2 tsp. baking soda
2 tsp. ground ginger
1 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
1 tsp. ground cloves
1 tsp. salt
1/2 cup vegetable shortening
4 Tbs. (1/2 stick) unsalted butter
1 cup firmly packed dark brown sugar
1 egg, lightly beaten
1/4 cup dark molasses
Royal icing, colorful glitters and sugars for decorating

Directions:

Have all ingredients at room temperature.

Over a sheet of waxed paper, sift together the flour, baking soda, ginger, cinnamon, cloves and salt; sift two more times and set aside. In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the shortening, butter and sugar on high speed until light and fluffy, 2 to 4 minutes; stop mixer and scrape down sides of bowl occasionally. Add the egg and molasses and continue beating until blended, 1 to 2 minutes more; stop mixer and scrape down sides of bowl occasionally. Reduce speed to low, add the flour mixture and beat until just blended and no lumps of flour remain. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface, shape it into a ball and divide in half. Shape each half into a 5-inch flat disk. Cover separately with plastic wrap and refrigerate at least 1 hour or as long as overnight.

Position a rack in the center of an oven and preheat to 350°F. Lightly grease two baking sheets.

On a lightly floured surface, roll out half of the dough to 1/4-inch thickness. Using snowflake-shaped cookie cutters, cut out cookies and transfer to prepared baking sheets. Gather scraps of dough into a ball and continue rolling and cutting cookies. Bake until the cookies are lightly browned around the edges, 8 to 10 minutes.

Transfer baking sheets to wire racks and cool for 5 minutes. Using a spatula, transfer cookies to racks to cool completely. Repeat with the remaining dough. When cookies have cooled, decorate as desired with icing, glitters and sugars. Makes 10 to 20 cookies, depending on cutter size.