

CLASSIC GINGERBREAD CUT-OUT COOKIES



INGREDIENTS

FOR THE COOKIES:

- 1 CUP (2 STICKS) UNSALTED BUTTER, AT ROOM TEMPERATURE
- 1 CUP PACKED BROWN SUGAR
- 1 TABLESPOON GROUND CINNAMON
- 1 TABLESPOON GROUND GINGER
- 1/2 TEASPOON GROUND CLOVES
- 1 CUP MOLASSES (NOT BLACKSTRAP)
- 1 LARGE EGG
- 5 CUPS ALL-PURPOSE FLOUR
- 1 TEASPOON BAKING SODA
- 1 TEASPOON SALT

FOR THE FROSTING:

- 2 CUPS POWDERED SUGAR
- 1/4 CUP MILK
- 1 TEASPOON VANILLA EXTRACT

INSTRUCTIONS

1 PLACE THE BUTTER, BROWN SUGAR, CINNAMON, GINGER, AND CLOVES IN A STAND MIXER FITTED WITH A PADDLE ATTACHMENT. (ALTERNATIVELY, USE AN ELECTRIC HAND MIXER AND LARGE BOWL.) BEAT ON MEDIUM SPEED UNTIL IT RESEMBLES THICK FROSTING AND NO MORE STREAKS OF BUTTER REMAIN.

SCRAPE DOWN THE SIDES OF THE BOWL, THEN BEAT IN THE MOLASSES FOLLOWED BY THE EGG UNTIL FULLY INCORPORATED; THE DOUGH WILL BE CREAMY AND LOOSE.

2 PLACE THE FLOUR, BAKING SODA, AND SALT IN A MEDIUM BOWL AND WHISK TO COMBINE. WITH THE MIXER ON LOW SPEED, BEAT IN THE FLOUR BARELY INCORPORATED AND JUST A LITTLE FLOUR REMAINS ON THE SIDES OF THE BOWL. STOP THE MIXER AND FINISH MIXING IN THE REMAINING FLOUR BY HAND WITH A STIFF SPATULA. AT THIS POINT, THE DOUGH SHOULD BE VERY SOFT AND PLIABLE, BUT WORKABLE, LIKE PLAY-DOUGH.

3 DIVIDE THE COOKIE DOUGH INTO 3 PIECES. PAT EACH PIECE INTO A DISK AND WRAP IN PLASTIC WRAP. CHILL FOR AT LEAST 1 HOUR OR AS LONG AS OVERNIGHT.

**4**

WHEN READY TO BAKE THE COOKIES, ARRANGE 2 RACKS TO DIVIDE THE OVEN INTO THIRDS AND HEAT TO 350°F. LINE 2 BAKING SHEETS WITH PARCHMENT PAPER.

5

SPRINKLE A WORK SURFACE LIGHTLY WITH FLOUR. UNWRAP ONE DISK OF DOUGH AND PLACE ON TOP (KEEP THE REMAINING DISKS IN THE REFRIGERATOR). SPRINKLE THE DOUGH AND A ROLLING PIN WITH A LITTLE MORE FLOUR. ROLL OUT THE DOUGH TO 1/4- TO 1/8-INCH THICK.

CUT OUT AS MANY COOKIES AS WILL FIT AND TRANSFER THE CUT-OUT COOKIES TO THE BAKING SHEET. IF THE DOUGH STILL FEELS COOL, YOU CAN RE-ROLL THE SCRAPS AND CUT OUT MORE COOKIES; OTHERWISE PAT THE SCARPS INTO A DISK AND REFRIGERATE. CONTINUE ROLLING AND CUTTING THE COOKIES UNTIL BOTH COOKIE SHEETS ARE FULL.

6

BAKE, ROTATING THE BAKING SHEETS HALFWAY THROUGH, UNTIL THE COOKIES FEEL FIRM AT THE EDGES, ARE PUFFED IN THE MIDDLE, AND ARE A SLIGHTLY TOASTIER SHADE OF BROWN AROUND THE EDGES, 8 TO 10 MINUTES.

LET THE COOKIES COOL FOR 5 MINUTES ON THE BAKING SHEET, THEN TRANSFER TO WIRE COOLING RACKS TO COOL COMPLETELY. CONTINUE ROLLING, CUTTING, AND BAKING THE REMAINING COOKIE DOUGH; SCRAPS CAN BE RE-ROLLED SEVERAL TIMES, BUT MAKE SURE THE BAKING SHEETS ARE COMPLETELY COOLED BETWEEN BATCHES.

7

WHEN READY TO FROST, STIR TOGETHER THE POWDERED SUGAR, MILK, AND VANILLA EXTRACT TO FORM A SMOOTH ICING. IT SHOULD BE THICK BUT POURABLE, AND A RIBBON DRIZZLED OVER THE TOP OF THE ICING SHOULD HOLD FOR A FEW SECONDS BEFORE MELTING.

TRANSFER THE ICING TO SQUEEZE BOTTLES USING A FUNNEL; IF THE ICING SEEMS TOO THICK TO FLOW THROUGH THE FUNNEL, TRY SQUEEZING THE BOTTLE TO SUCTION THE ICING INTO THE BOTTLE AND START THE FLOW. IF THE ICING STILL SEEMS TOO THICK, STIR IN MORE MILK 1 TEASPOON AT A TIME UNTIL WORKABLE. (BE CAREFUL OF ADDING TOO MUCH LIQUID; IF THE ICING IS TOO LOOSE, IT WILL PUDDLE INSTEAD OF FORMING LINES.)

8

DECORATE THE GINGERBREAD COOKIES. IF YOU'RE ADDING ANY CANDIES, PLACE THESE ON WHILE THE FROSTING IS STILL WET. LET THE ICING DRY FOR SEVERAL HOURS. ONCE DRY, THE COOKIES CAN BE STACKED BETWEEN SHEETS OF PARCHMENT IN AN AIRTIGHT CONTAINER AND KEPT AT ROOM TEMPERATURE.

NOTES-

DECORATING OPTION: YOU CAN ALSO USE A PIPING BAG TO DECORATE THE COOKIES INSTEAD OF SQUEEZE BOTTLES.

STORAGE: THE COOKIES ARE BEST WHEN EATEN WITHIN A WEEK, BUT WILL KEEP FOR SEVERAL WEEKS.