

GINGERBREAD COOKIE DOUGH

(Makes 2 small houses)



125 mL	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	shortening (or margarine)
125 mL	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	sugar
1	1	egg
125 mL	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	molasses*
15 mL	1 Tbsp.	vinegar
250 mL	1 cups	flour
3 mL	$\frac{3}{4}$ tsp.	baking soda
1 mL	$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp.	salt
2-3 mL	1-1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp.	ground ginger
2 mL	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp.	ground cinnamon
2 mL	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp.	ground cloves
~375-425mL	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ c.	flour**

*Use Crosby's Family Cooking Molasses for a nice dark colour

****Not all of the flour may be needed**

- 1) Cream shortening well.
- 2) Gradually add sugar and cream well.
- 3) Beat in egg, molasses and vinegar.
- 4) Sift together 250 mL (1 cup) of the flour along with the baking soda, salt and spices. Set aside remaining flour in a separate bowl.
- 5) Gradually blend that first cup of flour and spices into the creamed mixture and mix well.
- 6) Add another cup of the flour gradually, blending well. You may find that at this point the dough is stiff enough and the remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ -1/4 cup of flour may make the dough too dry and crumbly. Save out the last portion of flour for flouring the board and it will get worked in then. Your dough should feel soft and workable but not sticky. If you think it has gotten too dry and crumbly then re-crumble into a bowl and sprinkle with a little water and work until it comes together and is workable.
- 7) Gather dough into a ball and wrap tightly with plastic wrap.
- 8) Chill 3 hours. (We may not do this. Chilling often makes it too stiff to work with.)
- 9) Roll out dough to 3mm (1/8") thickness (*check this with a ruler) on a lightly floured board checking occasionally to see if it is sticking. ***You might find it easier to shape large, cut-out pieces of gingerbread directly on the baking sheet or onto parchment paper, so that the dough does not distort as you transfer it from the work surface.*
- 10) Cut into shapes.

- 11) Place 2.5cm (1") apart on greased or parchment lined cookie sheets. This allows room for expansion.
- 12) Bake at 375° F for 8-10 mins. or until firm and lightly browned. **Like any cookie, gingerbread is not crisp or firm when it first comes out of the oven: this means it may be difficult to tell whether it is cooked, particularly as cooking times vary from oven to oven. Generally, the dough will have risen slightly and will be just colouring around the edges. Do not undercook however.*
- 13) Cool slightly on the sheet, in which time it will start to crisp, and then remove to racks to cool completely. **If the gingerbread still feels very soft, return it to the oven for a few minutes.*
- 14) Very often the gingerbread will distort slightly during baking. If you wish or feel the need to trim it to reshape (especially for the house pieces to fit properly), be sure to do it while the dough is still warm. If you allow it to cool and then try to trim it, it will break.
- 15) To store: Large, flat pieces of gingerbread must be cooled and stored on a flat surface or they will become distorted. For houses, you may prefer to allow the cookie shapes to dry overnight, so just cover loosely. After which, store in an airtight container.

ROYAL or DECORATOR FROSTING

(enough for 1 small houses - 375 mL or 1 1/2 cups)

50mL	¼ cup	"Just Whites" or "Simply Whites"
500mL	2 cups	"icing" sugar

- 1) In a large bowl, using an electric mixer set on low, beat the egg white until just frothy.
- 2) Gradually blend in the icing sugar until all the sugar is moistened, then beat at high speed 5-7 minutes or until "stiff" peaks form.

*If necessary, add more icing sugar if it is not stiff enough or add a few drops of water if the consistency is too thick.

**To keep icing from drying out while you are using it, cover the bowl with a clean, "damp" cloth or tightly seal with plastic wrap. This icing dried rock hard quite quickly and does not keep well, so make small quantities at a time and *do keep covered*.

***You can also substitute 1 fresh egg whites or 15 mL (1 Tbsp.) Wilton Meringue Powder mixed with 30 mL (2 Tbsp.) warm water

****Double recipe for larger quantities.

GINGERBREAD HOUSES

You will need:

- Gingerbread cookie dough
- Edible glue
- Royal decorators frosting
- Paper pattern
- Foil lined cardboard base
- Assorted candies for decorating

- 1) Prepare and refrigerate gingerbread cookie dough.
- 2) Prepare cardboard base by covering it with foil and taping well on the backside. (decide if you wish extra space for a yard, trees, etc.) A wooden board, if you can find one, would be better to support the weight.
- 3) Enlarge pattern if needed and cut out.
- 4) Preheat oven to 375° F.
- 5) Grease cookie sheet or line with parchment paper.
- 6) Roll out dough, one half at a time, to 1/8" thickness on a lightly floured board. (It will puff up when baked to don't have it too thick.)
 - *Another option is to roll the dough right onto the back of the cookie sheet or parchment paper and then remove the excess dough away from the pattern pieces (then slide parchment onto pan).
- 7) Lay on pattern pieces and cut out with a "sharp" knife.
 - *cut down, avoid dragging the knife and making a jagged edge
 - *start with the largest pieces first (roof, then sides, then front and back, and end with the small pieces - door , chimney, shutters) - this will reduce the need for rerolling.
 - *remember to cut two roof pieces, 2 sides, and 2 front/back pieces, also 2 chimney side pieces if you are adding a chimney)
 - *cut out the door and windows after it has been transferred to the cookie sheet (it is less likely to get distorted then, you can also leave these pieces in place during baking and then remove while hot from the oven.
 - *save the door you cut out to hinge on after, also save window pieces and cut in half to hinge on as shutters
 - *when transferring from the board to the cookie sheet try to avoid stretching it out of shape; if you have, use the pattern to reshape it on the cookie sheet
 - *remember to space them apart to allow for expansion
- 8) Bake the gingerbread pieces 5-6 minutes or until firm and nicely browned. (Do not underbake for houses or it may sag and it also tends to leech into the white frosting.

*Some like to replace the pattern on the cooked dough and retrim. This may be advisable if it has badly distorted or when trying to piece together a complicated house. Make sure you do this while the cookie is still warm.

9) Cool slightly on the pan and then transfer to racks to cool completely.

10) Make edible glue or cement.

11) **Assembling the House**

*plot your moves ahead

*determine position of front, back and sides of house on your base

*start with the house back, dip bottom edge of house back in the edible glue and then "quickly" place in position on base and hold in place a few seconds until the glue hardens *or* pipe on very thick Decorator's Frosting along edges to join

*next join sides to the front by gluing 1 short edge of side to the front piece, then do the same for the other side

*then join this 3 piece unit to the house back on the base by dipping the free short edges of the sides and all along the bottom edge in the glue and quickly placing it in position (you can leave house free standing for now - don't need to glue to base yet)

*now, working quickly and with the assistance of your partner, use a popsicle stick to put some glue on the top edge of the front and back pieces and at the same time glue the roof pieces together and then "quickly" set the roof on the house before any of the glue hardens - one can hold the roof pieces in place while the other is gluing the front and back top edges. (or use decorator's frosting and find some things to hold pieces in place overnight while icing sets)

12) Prepare the Decorator Frosting

13) **AND NOW THE FUN!!!**

*use your imagination and don't worry too much about being perfect - it will look great when it's all done

*you may wish to spread some icing on the base to look like snow or leave it plain

*fill a decorator bag with icing and using appropriate tips (star tips for most work) pipe a border at all corners of the house, along the roof peak, along the roof edges, and anywhere else you wish to cover joins or that you think will look good

*before icing hardens, attach your candies

*look at magazine pictures for additional ideas you may want to try (e.g. trees, pile of logs, people, etc.)

14) Set aside overnight for icing to dry and harden.