

Gingerbread Cookies

Active time 1 hour 45 minutes

Total time 2 hours 30 minutes plus chilling, cooling, and decorating

Makes about 5½ dozen cookies

- 4 c. all-purpose flour, plus more for rolling
- 1½ tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp. ground cloves
- 1 tsp. ground nutmeg
- ½ tsp. ground allspice
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 1 c. unsulfured molasses
- 2 Tbsp. light rum
- 2 Tbsp. grated peeled fresh ginger
- 2 tsp. baking soda
- ¾ c. trans-fat free vegetable shortening
- ¾ c. sugar
- 1 lg. egg
- Ornamental Frosting (at right), optional**

1. In large bowl, combine flour, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, allspice, salt, and pepper. In small bowl, combine molasses, rum, ginger, and baking soda.
2. In another large bowl, with mixer on medium speed, beat shortening until softened. Add sugar and beat until fluffy. Beat in egg until well combined. Reduce speed to low. Alternately add flour mixture and molasses mixture; beat just until blended, occasionally scraping bowl with rubber spatula.
3. Divide dough into 3 equal pieces. Flatten each piece into a disk; wrap each in plastic wrap. Refrigerate dough 4 hours or overnight, until firm enough to roll.

4. Preheat oven to 325°F. On lightly floured surface with floured rolling pin, roll 1 disk of dough ⅛ in. thick. With floured 3- to 4-in. holiday-shaped cookie cutters, cut out as many cookies as possible; wrap and refrigerate trimmings. Place cookies, 1 inch apart, on ungreased large cookie sheet.
5. Bake cookies 12 to 14 minutes or until edges begin to brown. Transfer cookies to wire rack to cool completely. Repeat with remaining dough and trimmings.
6. When cookies are cool, decorate as desired with Ornamental Frosting, if using. Set aside to allow frosting to dry. Store cookies (layered with waxed paper if decorated) in airtight containers at room temperature up to 2 weeks or in freezer up to 3 months.

EACH SERVING ■ About 70 calories, 1 g protein, 12 g carbohydrate, 2 g total fat (1 g saturated), 0 g fiber, 3 mg cholesterol, 60 mg sodium.

