

# GLORIOUS COOKIES

## GINGERBREAD CUTOUTS

*pictured at right*

Everybody loves a good ginger cookie at Christmas, especially Lifestyle Director Donna Bulseco. She bakes up a storm during the holidays—with her son, Roy, 4—decorating these spicy treats to give to friends, family, teachers, and husband Dana Vlcek.

**PREP:** 55 minutes plus cooling and decorating

**BAKE:** 12 minutes per batch

½ cup sugar  
½ cup light (mild) molasses  
2 teaspoons ground ginger  
1½ teaspoons ground cinnamon  
½ teaspoon ground cloves  
½ teaspoon ground nutmeg  
¼ teaspoon ground black pepper  
2 teaspoons baking soda  
½ cup margarine or butter (1 stick),  
cut into chunks  
1 large egg, beaten  
3½ cups all-purpose flour  
Ornamental Frosting (below)

1. In 3-quart saucepan, heat sugar, molasses, ginger, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, and pepper to boiling over medium heat, stirring occasionally. Remove saucepan from heat; stir in baking soda (mixture will foam up in the pan). Stir in margarine or butter until melted. With fork, stir in egg, then flour.

2. On lightly floured surface, knead dough until thoroughly mixed. Divide dough in half; wrap half of dough with plastic wrap and set aside.

3. Preheat oven to 325°F. With floured rolling pin, roll half of dough slightly thinner than ¼ inch. With floured 3- to 4-inch assorted cookie cutters, cut dough into as many cookies as possible; reserve trimmings. Place cookies, ½ inch apart, on ungreased large cookie sheet. Reroll trimmings and cut out more cookies.

4. Bake cookies 12 minutes or until edges begin to brown. Remove cookies to wire racks to cool. Repeat with remaining dough.

5. When cookies are cool, prepare Ornamental Frosting; use to decorate cookies as desired. Allow frosting to dry completely, about 1 hour. Store in tightly covered container up to 2 weeks. Makes about 3 dozen cookies.

■ Each cookie without frosting: About 90 calories, 1 g protein, 15 g carbohydrate, 3 g total fat (1 g saturated), 0 g fiber, 6 mg cholesterol, 105 mg sodium.



A festive trayful of brightly trimmed *Gingerbread Cutouts* and *Christmas Butter Cookies* is a welcome winter sight.

### ORNAMENTAL FROSTING

We used this basic hard-drying frosting—tinted different hues—to “paint” the cheerful *Gingerbread Cutouts* and *Christmas Butter Cookies* shown above.

1 package (16 ounces) confectioners’ sugar  
3 tablespoons meringue powder\*  
assorted food-color pastes (optional)\*

1. In bowl, with mixer at medium speed, beat confectioners’ sugar, meringue powder, and ⅓ cup warm water until

blended and mixture is so stiff that knife drawn through it leaves a clean-cut path, about 5 minutes.

2. If you like, tint frosting with food colorings; keep covered with plastic wrap to prevent drying out. With small metal spatula, artist’s paintbrush, or decorating bag with small writing tip, decorate cookies with frosting. (You may need to thin frosting with a little warm water to obtain the

\*Meringue powder and food-color pastes are available in specialty stores wherever cake-decorating equipment is sold, or from Wilton Industries: 630-963-7100, extension 320.