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How to Make Homemade Gingerbread Men Cookies - Easily!

Home-made gingerbread men are fun and easy to make! The whole house will smell great and the kids will love decorating them. It's so easy, my 2 year old had no trouble decorating and sat quietly putting the eyes on the gingerbread men (note the before and after photos... some of the gingerbread men became mutants with many, many eyes, but he had fun!



Step 1 - Gather the Ingredients and Supplies

Making gingerbread men is especially easy with these step-by-step instructions, complete with photographs to illustrate each step. You can make the Gingerbread men simple, like the one in Shrek.. and eat them. Or you can get elaborate with the icing decoration, M&M's, raisons, chocolate chips, sprinkles, gum drops and more... and still eat them!

Ingredients and Supplies

Step 1 - Gather the Ingredients and Supplies

1. Gingerbread dough

- 1 and 1/2 cups (12 fl oz)(usually, that's 1 bottle) of unsulphured molasses
- 1 and 1/2 cup (3 sticks) butter or margarine
- 8 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons double-acting baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 4 teaspoons ground ginger
- 4 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 tablespoon allspice
- 1 and 1/2 cups brown sugar (dark or light)
- 2 large eggs



2. Icing

- 4 egg whites
- 1 teaspoons cream of tartar
- 4 cups of confectioner's sugar (also called icing sugar or powdered sugar)

3. Cookie sheets

4. Cookie cutters

5. Aluminum foil or better yet, silicon baking mats

6. Heavy duty mixer (optional - you can mix by hand)

7. Rolling pin, I like the non-stick silicon type

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8. Cake knives
 9. Spatula
 10. Cooling racks
 11. Pastry bags and tips (OR a gallon sized Ziploc plastic bag (quart sized will do, also)) OR icing in the spray cans
 12. Candies: M&M's, gumdrops, lifesavers, chocolate chips, colored sprinkles, etc.
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Making the dough

Step 2 - Turn the oven on

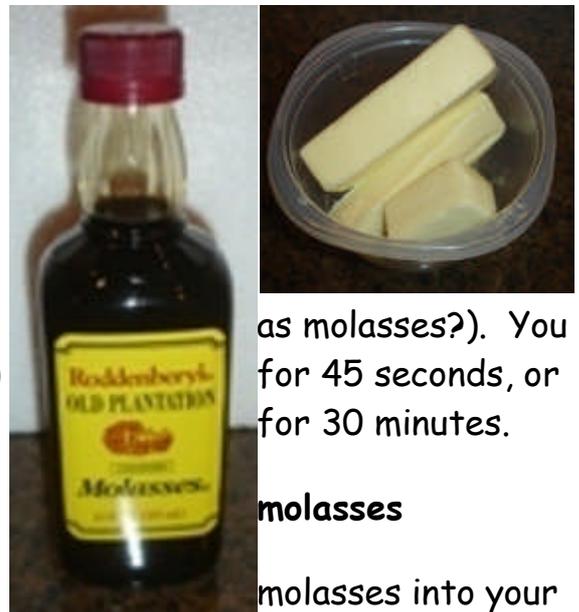


Now's a good time to get your oven pre-heating to 350 F (175 C)

Step 3 - Melt the butter

Melt the butter in the microwave or stovetop until just barely melted.

You might also warm the molasses so it pours and mixes more easily (remember the expression "slow can heat it in the microwave (with the lid removed) let it sit in a pot of very warm, almost hot, water



as molasses?). You for 45 seconds, or for 30 minutes.

Step 4 - Mix the butter and

molasses



Pour the melted butter and molasses into your mixing bowl (a large one!)

molasses into your

Step 5 - Add the eggs and brown sugar



Now add the eggs, and next the brown sugar! Note how I switched from a whisk to a heavy beater on the mixer.



Step 6 - Mix the dry ingredients

In another large bowl mix the

- 8 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoon double-acting baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 4 teaspoons ground ginger
- 4 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 12tablespoon allspice



Step 7 - Add the flour to the wet ingredients

If you have a mixer with a dough hook, it is time to put that on. Otherwise, you'll need to (knead to) do this by hand!





Back into the bowl and knead it into a smooth ball.

Step 8 - Chill!

The dough, that is. No time for you to relax, yet. Put the dough in a ziploc or other container and refrigerate at least 30 minutes. Most directions say that you can even leave it till the next day, and I'm sure you can, but that's not necessary.



Step 9 - Roll out some dough

On a silicon baking mat, waxed paper or a floured surface, roll out a small amount of the dough (about the size of a tennis ball) until it is about 1/4 inch thick. Don't get carried away trying to measure it, gingerbread is pretty tough stuff, so it can be as thin as 1/8 in some places or as thick as 1/2 inch, but 1/4 inch (1/2 cm for those of you in other countries) is ideal. If you don't have a silicon baking mat, you can roll the dough out on aluminum foil.



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Step 10 - Fire up your cookie cutter!

Have fun with your cookie cutter, gently pressing down till it touches the mat underneath.

Just place one of the paper pattern pieces on the dough and using a dull knife (like a table knife) cut around the edges.



Step 11 - Separate the cut-outs from the trim dough

You can gently peel away the excess dough between the cookies. If you cut them on a baking mat, you can lift the entire mat onto a cookie sheet to put in the oven. Otherwise, you will need to gently lift and move them.



Step 12 - Decorate with some hard candies.

If you want to put sugar bead eyes or buttons in now, you can press them into the dough. They may melt some, and you can always put them in afterwards, while the cookies are still warm and soft, or even "glue" them on with icing. You can also etch designs into the uncooked dough with a table knife; such as a smile, clothes, etc.



Step 13 - Pop them into the oven

Now pop the tray into the oven and let it cook for 12 to 15 minutes, until it puffs up a little bit and just starts to become golden and slightly firm. While one tray is baking, you can cut out the next tray.

Then remove the cooked batch and let cool!



Another tip about the cooked dough. It's easy to trim it when it is fresh from the oven, still warm and soft, so you can trim some defects then.

Making the Icing

The icing is your glue, as well as decoration!

Ingredients:

- 2 egg whites - If you use pasteurized eggs whites, like those in the carton at right, then the icing will be safe to eat (otherwise, the uncooked eggs may contain salmonella!)
- 1/4 teaspoon cream of tartar
- 2 cups of confectioner's sugar (also called icing sugar or powdered sugar)



Step 14 - Beat the egg whites



In a large bowl (I like standing electric mixer, like a KitchenAid) beat the egg whites until they begin to foam. Add the cream of tartar and beat until the whites are stiff but not dry.

Step 15 - Add the powdered sugar



Gradually beat in the icing sugar, beating for about 5 minutes until it reaches spreading consistency. Keep it covered and refrigerated until needed.

Step 16 - Fill your icing bag

If you have a pastry bag, use that, but it's easy to take a large (1 gallon) ziploc bag. Fill the bag, and pop it into the fridge. When you are ready to use it, just cut off 1/4 inch of a corner and you have an instant pastry bag!



Step 17 - Decorating the cookies

Ingredients and supplies:

- Icing, white and colored
- Gum drops,
- M&M's
- Life savers
- Chocolate chips
- Other hard candies
- Colored "sprinkles" or "jimmies"
- Colored icings (comes in cans now!)

Go wild! Icing can be use for anything To apply candy decorations, dab a small amount of icing to the underside of the candy and hold in place until set.

You can use dough scraps to roll out added decorative cut-outs, like a hat or scarf, to be



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applied with icing glue.

These cutouts can be impressed with designs before baking. They can be "painted" with colored icing.

[Write me to let me know how your cookies turned out and any tips you want to share.](#)

I hope you and the kids have fun! It should be a memorable experience!

Preserving your Gingerbread Men Cookies

Yep, you can actually spray them with Shellac or lacquer (available from paint stores, Home Depot, Lowes and Wal-Mart) and they should last for years. Just be sure to let it dry completely first. Of course, they'd no longer be edible!