

Fifth Dish

Gingerbread Cookies

Sometimes, all you want is an easy recipe to get food on the table as soon as possible. Other times, it pays to slow things down and savor the ritual of cooking. For Elaine Magee, this gingerbread recipe is the perfect opportunity to do just that. “Back when my daughters were really young, we started a tradition of hosting a Christmas Eve lunch complete with food activities for my daughters and their cousins,” Magee said. “This involved making overnight cinnamon rolls that they then brought home and baked Christmas morning and frosting gingerbread cookies!”

These cookies are more than just a fun family activity—thanks to a few ingredient substitutions, these treats offer some nutrition along with the fun. “I developed a ‘healthier but still delicious’ recipe with mostly whole wheat flour and a blend of butter and Neufchatel cream cheese. I made the dough intentionally less sweet to balance out the sweetness from the frosting and decorations.”

The gingerbread cookies became a holiday staple every year. “The kids would pick out their favorite to leave for Santa,” she remembered. “There was always lots of



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 375-degrees if baking cookies immediately. Line baking sheet with parchment paper and spray with cooking spray if desired.
2. In a mixing bowl, beat butter and cream cheese with electric mixer on medium speed for 30 seconds. Add sugar, molasses, honey, and egg and beat till combined, scraping sides of the bowl.
3. Add whole-wheat flour, baking powder, ginger, cinnamon, cloves, and cardamom and beat just till combined. Beat in white flour on low speed.
4. On a lightly floured surface, roll half of dough to about 1/4-inch thickness. Cut dough into shapes using cookie cutters of choice. Place 1-inch apart onto prepared cookie sheet. Bake each batch until edges are lightly browned—about 8 minutes (if using larger cookie cutters, it will take longer). Remove cookies and cool on wire racks.
5. Decorate cookies with icing or frosting as desired! ENJOY!

Ingredients

- 1/4 cup butter or butter flavored shortening (room temperature)
- 1/4 cup Neufchatel or light cream cheese
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup molasses
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1 large egg
- 1 3/4 cups whole wheat flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cardamom (optional)
- 3/4 cup unbleached white flour

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