

Ginger Spice Cookies

1. 1-inch knob peeled fresh ginger or 2 tablespoons prepared ginger juice
2. 3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
3. 3/4 teaspoon baking soda
4. 1/2 teaspoon fine salt
5. 1 tablespoon ground ginger
6. 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
7. 2 teaspoons ground allspice
8. 1/2 teaspoon freshly and finely ground black pepper
9. 1 cup unsalted butter, room temperature cut into pieces
10. 1 cup superfine sugar
11. 2/3 cup molasses, preferably sorghum **Icing:**
12. 1/4 cup water
13. 3 tablespoons egg white powder
14. 2 cups confectioners' sugar
15. Food coloring, sprinkles, candies, or colored sugars as desired

Puree the ginger in a mini food processor with 2 tablespoons water. Squeeze and strain juice through cheesecloth or a fine mesh strainer. Discard the ginger pulp. Reserve the juice.

Sift the flour, baking soda, salt and spices into a medium bowl, then whisk in the pepper; set aside.

Cream the butter and sugar with a handheld mixer until light and fluffy, about 1 1/2 minutes. Add the molasses and ginger juice and beat until evenly incorporated, about 2 minutes. (Stir together with a spatula if needed.) Gradually blend the dry ingredients on low speed into the butter mixture until you have a crumbly mixture. Bring the dough together by hand pressing and kneading lightly until moist, but not tacky. Divide into 2 equal portions, press into disks about 1/2-inch thick. Wrap in plastic and chill for at least 1 hour or overnight. Position racks evenly in the oven and preheat to 350 degrees F. Dust the dough and a work surface with flour. Roll the dough about 1/4 inch thick. Cut out cookies into desired shapes. Transfer to a parchment lined baking sheet. Bake until the cookies are a rich tawny brown, about 18 to 20 minutes. Cool on a rack. For decorating: Whisk the water and egg white powder in a medium bowl until foamy and smooth. Gradually whisk in the confectioners' sugar to make a smooth icing. For multiple colors divide the icing into batches and add a food coloring as desired. Spread or pipe the icing onto the cookies. Finish with sprinkles, or candies. Let rest on a rack until the icing sets, about 30 minutes. **Cook's Comment: For a chewier cookie, roll them 1/3 to 1/2-inch thick and bake for 16 to 20 minutes.**