

Gingerbread Straws

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These are long on flavor, with a friendly calorie count. A pastry wheel with a fluted edge will help make pretty and even sticks.

MAKE AHEAD: The dough can be refrigerated for up to 1 week or wrapped well and frozen for up to 1 month. The baked straws can be stored in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks.

Makes 56 cookies



Ingredients:

- • 3 3/4 cups flour, plus more as needed
- • 1 tablespoon ground ginger
- • 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- • 1 teaspoon ground cloves
- • 1 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
- • 3/4 teaspoon salt
- • 3/4 teaspoon baking soda
- • 3/4 cup molasses
- • 1/4 cup water
- • 12 tablespoons (1 1/2 sticks) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- • 1 cup packed light or dark brown sugar
- • 1/4 cup sugar, preferably coarse, for sprinkling

Directions:

Combine the flour, ginger, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, salt and baking soda in a medium bowl.

Combine the molasses and water in a liquid measuring cup.

Combine the butter and brown sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer or use a hand-held mixer; beat on medium speed for 3 to 5 minutes, until light and fluffy. Reduce the speed to low and add the molasses-water mixture; scrape down the sides of the bowl. Add the flour mixture in increments, until a stiff dough forms. If the dough is sticky, add up to 1/4 cup flour; mix well.

Divide the dough into quarters and form each portion into a 1/2-inch-thick rectangle; each portion fits nicely in a pint-size resealable plastic food storage bag. Or wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate for about 1 hour, until fairly firm. (At this point, the dough can be refrigerated for up to 1 week or frozen for up to 1 month.)

When ready to bake, position the oven racks on the upper and lower thirds of the oven; preheat to 350 degrees. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper.

Liberally flour the work surface. Working with one portion at a time, roll the dough out to a 9-by-7-inch rectangle. Sprinkle with 1 tablespoon of the sugar, using the rolling pin to press the sugar into the dough. Use a pastry wheel, preferably with a fluted edge, to cut the dough into 14 sticks that are a generous 1/2 inch wide and 7 inches long. Place them about 1/2 inch apart on the baking sheet. Repeat with the remaining 3 portions of dough. Make sure to dust off any visible flour from the surface of the unbaked cookies.

Bake for 10 minutes, then rotate the sheets from top to bottom and front to back. Bake for 8 to 12 minutes or until the straws are fragrant and crisp. Transfer the straws to a wire rack to cool completely.