

Iced Molasses Cookies

By Chef Susan Reid

Yield: 3 dozen

Dough

1 cup (2 sticks, 8 ounces) unsalted butter
1/3 cup (4 ounces) molasses
2 1/4 cups (15 3/4 ounces) sugar
1 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons ground ginger
1 teaspoon ground allspice
3 cups (12 3/4 ounces) King Arthur Unbleached All-Purpose Flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 large egg

Frosting

1/4 cup (1 1/2 ounces) meringue powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3 to 4 cups (12 to 16 ounces) glazing sugar or confectioners' sugar
1/3 to 1/2 cup (2 5/8 to 4 ounces) cool water

For the dough: Heat the butter, molasses, sugar, and salt in a saucepan over low heat, or in a bowl in the microwave, stirring until the butter melts and the sugar and salt dissolve. Remove from the heat and stir in the spices. Transfer the mixture to a large mixing bowl.

In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour and baking soda. Beat half the flour mixture into the melted butter mixture, then beat in the egg. Stir in the remaining flour. Cover and refrigerate the dough for 1 hour, or until it's firm.

To bake: Preheat the oven to 350°F. Lightly grease (or line with parchment) two baking sheets. Shape or scoop the dough into 1 1/2" balls; a tablespoon cookie scoop works well here.

Transfer the balls to the prepared baking sheets. Bake for 13 minutes; they'll still look soft and won't have changed color much. Remove from the oven and let cool for 5 minutes on the pan before transferring them to a rack to cool completely. They'll become more crisp as they cool.

For the frosting: In a medium-sized mixing bowl, whisk together the dry ingredients. Add 1/3 cup of cool water and stir or beat on slow speed. The mixture will seem hard and lumpy, but the sugar will dissolve after 4 or 5 minutes and everything will smooth out. Add more water, 1 tablespoon at a time, mixing well after each addition, to achieve the consistency you desire. To get a very smooth, shiny glaze, the icing should be the consistency of molasses.

