

Colonial Cookies

A standard item for cookie jars or crocks in young America. Recipes in old cookbooks vary in procedure and richness. Older recipes seldom mention sugar, for these cookies were made with whatever sweet was at hand, and molasses could mean sorghum syrup or cane sugar molasses. The former was often made from sorghum cane grown on the farm and crushed and boiled to make a sweetener that cost little and was readily available. For finer texture, the sugar and butter or lard were creamed, but for quicker mixing, the butter or lard was heated in the molasses before the remaining ingredients were added.

Melt the butter or lard in the molasses (stirring so it will not boil), let it cool to room temperature, and add the sugar. Sift the flour with the salt, soda, and spices, and add. Chill the dough if it is too soft to handle. Roll out about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thick on a lightly floured board. Cut with a floured cutter (these cookies used to be made very large), place on a greased baking pan or sheet, and bake at 375 degrees 8 to 15 minutes, depending upon the size, until a light brown. Loosen from the pan while still warm, and cool in a single layer on a rack.

Molasses Cookies

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter or lard
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar
1 cup molasses, dark or light
4 cups sifted all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking soda
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons cinnamon
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon cloves
1 teaspoon ginger

Gingersnaps

(about 40 cookies)

A thin, crisp, spicy, crinkly topped gingersnap, easily made by hand or in the food processor.

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup vegetable shortening	2 cups flour
1 cup sugar, plus extra to roll the cookies in	2 teaspoons baking soda
1 egg	$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
$\frac{1}{4}$ cup molasses	1 tablespoon powdered ginger
	1 teaspoon cinnamon

Preheat the oven to 350°F and grease some cookie sheets.

Beat together the shortening and 1 cup of the sugar. Add the egg, and beat until light and fluffy, then add the molasses. Stir and toss together the flour, baking soda, salt, ginger, and cinnamon, and add to the first mixture, beating until smooth and blended.

Gather up bits of the dough and roll them between the palms of your hands into 1-inch balls, then roll each ball in sugar. Place about 2 inches apart on the prepared cookie sheets and bake for 10 to 12 minutes, until the cookies have spread and the tops have cracked. Remove from the sheets and cool on a rack.