

Chocolate Gingerbread Cookies

ingredients:

3 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 cup Scharffen Berger Unsweetened Cocoa Powder
3/4 cup dark brown sugar
3/4 teaspoon baking soda
1 tablespoon cinnamon
1 tablespoon ground ginger
3/4 teaspoon ground cloves
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon orange zest
12 tablespoons unsalted butter, soft but still cool and cut into 12 pieces
1 egg, room temperature
3/4 cup molasses
2 ounces Scharffen Berger 62% Cacao Semisweet Chocolate, very finely chopped
optional stir in: 3/4 cup dried cranberries

directions:

In the bowl of a stand mixer, using the whisk beater stir together the flour, cocoa powder, brown sugar, baking soda, cinnamon, ginger, cloves, salt, and zest at low speed until combined. Stop the mixer and add the butter pieces; mix at medium-low speed until the mixture is sandy and resembles fine meal, about 1 1/2 minutes. Add the chopped chocolate and stir to combine. Remove the whisk beater and add the paddle.

Whisk the egg and molasses together. Reduce the speed to low and, with the mixture running, gradually add the molasses mixture. Mix until the dough is moist, then increase the speed to medium and mix until thoroughly combined, about 15 seconds.

Scrape the dough onto a work surface. Divide it in half and wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for an hour, or until firm enough to work with without becoming sticky.

Working with one portion at a time, roll the dough into 1/4 inch thick between two sheets of parchment paper. Repeat with the other half of the dough. Leaving the dough sandwiched between the parchment paper, stack the dough on a baking sheet and freeze until firm, about 15 minutes. Alternatively, refrigerate for 2 hours or overnight.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper. Remove 1 dough sheet from the freezer and place on a work surface. Peel off the top parchment sheet and gently lay it back in place. Flip the dough, remove the bottom layer and discard.

Cut the dough into 5-inch gingerbread people or 3-inch gingerbread cookies, transferring the shapes to the baking sheet with a wide, metal spatula and spacing them 3/4 inch apart. Set the scrapes aside for reuse.

Bake cookies at 350 degrees F for 8-12 minutes on the middle rack. Let cool on baking sheet for 2 minutes before transferring to a wire rack. Repeat with remaining dough. Frost as desired, once completely cool.

*This delicious recipe brought to you by **Good Life Eats***
<http://www.goodlifeeats.com/2010/12/recipe-exchange-chocolate-gingerbread.html>