

Cutout Cookie Gingerbread

High on spice yet relatively delicate in texture, this dough is perfect for 2-D cookies and small-scale 3-D construction projects, like my [sandwiched baskets](#) and Fabergé egg cookies shown here. It also spreads less than my Signature Sugar Cookie Dough (recipe in [my books](#)), making it more suitable for tight-fitting angular constructions, such as boxes, cornets, blocks . . . basically any cookie creation with corners! And how does it do with contouring?! Yep, it's great for that too - minimal, if any, cracking, even when flexed into highly curvy shapes.

Yield: About 3 pounds dough or 6 1/2 to 7 dozen (2 1/2-inch) round cookies

Prep Talk: For easiest handling, the dough should be chilled about 3 hours before rolling and cutting. The dough can be frozen for 1 month or more with minimal loss of flavor if wrapped tightly in plastic and then foil. For best eating, store baked cookies in airtight containers at room temperature and enjoy within 1 to 1 1/2 weeks.

Ingredients:

- 5 cups unsifted all-purpose flour*
- 2 1/2 teaspoons ground ginger
- 1 1/4 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda**
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup (1 8-ounce stick) [shortening](#)
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1 cup [mild molasses](#)
- 2 tablespoons white vinegar

* Note 1: Measure the flour by spooning it into the cup and then leveling; alternatively, weigh the flour for more accuracy. 1 cup flour measured this way weighs about 4.8 ounces or 136 grams.

** Note 2: For 3-D curved cookies or ones where you want very little (to no) spreading, cut the baking soda in half.

Method:

1 | Stir the flour, spices, baking soda, and salt together in a large bowl. Set aside for use in Step 4.

2 | Using an electric mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat the shortening and sugar until well combined. Add the egg and beat on medium-high speed until light and fluffy, about 1 minute. Scrape down the sides of the bowl, as needed, to ensure even mixing.

3 | Turn the mixer to medium speed and add the molasses and vinegar. Mix well. Scrape down the sides of the bowl, as needed.

4 | Turn the mixer to low speed and gradually add the dry ingredients. Mix just to combine; however, make sure there are no dry spots.

5 | Flatten the dough into a disk (or two disks for easier handling). Wrap tightly in plastic and refrigerate about 3 hours, or until firm enough to roll without sticking.

6 | Position a rack in the center of the oven and preheat the oven to 375°F. Line two or more cookie sheets with parchment paper (or silicone baking mats) and set aside.

7 | Roll the dough on a lightly floured surface to a 1/8- to 3/16-inch thickness. (Note: It's best to roll these cookies no thicker than 3/16 inch in order to keep them their flattest for decorating.) Cut out assorted shapes with your favorite cookie cutters. Carefully transfer the cookies to the prepared cookie sheets with an offset spatula, leaving no less than 3/4 inch between each cutout.

8 | Baking time will vary considerably with cookie size and thickness. Bake until the cookies are firm to the touch and lightly browned around the edges, about 8 to 10 minutes for 2 1/2-inch round cookies. Let particularly long or delicately shaped cookies cool 1 to 2 minutes on the cookie sheet before transferring to wire racks. Otherwise, immediately transfer the cookies. Cool completely before frosting and/or assembling with [Royal Icing](#) or storing.

Coriander Seed Variation:

Since I've forever been infatuated with my mom's Anise Seed Variation of Signature Sugar Cookie Dough (in [my books](#)), a similar whole seed spin on this gingerbread seemed like the next most logical twist!

Follow the steps above, except sprinkle each cookie sheet with 1 1/2 teaspoons crushed or coarsely ground coriander seeds before placing and baking the cookies in Step 7.