

Christmas Tree Ship Gingerbread Cookies

Credit: "The Christmas Tree Schooner" by artist Charles Vickery

FROM KIMBERLY LOY & THE NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY FOUNDATION

Timing

Prep Time for Dough: 25 minutes

Baking Time for Cookies: 7-9 minutes

Prep Time for Icing: 5 minutes

Time for Decorating Cookies: Depends on how creative you want to be!

Tools

- Hand or stand mixer
- Dry and liquid measuring cups, measuring spoons
- Mixing bowls (at least 2)
- Cookie spatula
- 2-4 nonstick baking sheets
- Plastic wrap
- Wax paper
- Large cutting board or silicon pastry mat
- Cookie cutters or foil to make cookie cutters
- Tools for decorating cookie
- Squeeze tips (or a kitchen butter knife for spreading icing)

Ingredients

Gingerbread Cookies

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup granulated sugar
- 5 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 2 tsps ground ginger
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp ground cloves
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp ground nutmeg
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt
- 1 cup (2 sticks) room temperature (slightly softened) unsalted butter
- 1 cup brown sugar (light or dark brown)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup unsulphured molasses (use mild, not robust)
- 1 tsp vanilla extract (avoid imitation vanilla extract if at all possible)
- 2 large eggs (room temperature)

Icing

- 2 pounds confectioners' sugar
- 4 tsp powdered egg whites or 3 tsps of meringue powder
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup water or milk
- 1 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- Food coloring





Directions

Gingerbread Cookies

Preparation

- Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
- In a bowl, mix together flour, baking soda, baking powder, spices, and salt.
- Use a hand or stand mixer to beat butter for 1-2 minutes at medium-high speed.
- Add sugar, vanilla, and molasses and beat on medium-high speed till combined and fluffy. Add eggs and mix till blended.
- Add dry gradually ingredients while on low speed.
- The dough will be dense and slightly sticky. If you have the time to chill it, you may find it easier to work, but chilling is not necessary.

Forming & Baking

- Roll out dough on a lightly floured surface to approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thickness. Cut out desired shapes, flouring the cookie cutters as often as needed to avoid sticking. Be careful not to rework the same piece of dough too many times as it will get tough.
 - TIP: Roll each piece of dough out once, cut the cookies that will fit, and then incorporate the scraps into the next ball of dough that you roll out.
- Place cookies at least $\frac{1}{2}$ inch apart on the baking sheets.
- Bake for 7-9 minutes. Remove from oven, allow to cool on baking sheet for five minutes before moving cookies to wire cooling racks. Allow cookies to cool completely before icing.

Icing

- Beat together all ingredients in a large bowl using an electric mixer at medium speed till just combined, usually about 1 minute.
- Increase speed to high and beat icing until it holds stiff peaks, about 3-5 minutes.
- Add food coloring until desired colors are achieved.

About the Christmas Tree Ship

The wreck of the *Rouse Simmons* - the Christmas Tree Ship - is within the proposed Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast National Marine Sanctuary, which possesses exceptional historic, archaeological, and recreational value. This shipwreck and others deserve national recognition and protection through the national marine sanctuary program. Learn more about the story of the Christmas Tree Ship at marinesanctuary.org/christmas-tree-ship.