



CHOCOLATE RASPBERRY PAVLOVA

Recommended by Patrick Hopewell



Ingredients for 8-10 servings

For chocolate meringue base

- 6 large egg whites
- 1½ cups superfine sugar
- 3 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa (sieved)
- 1 teaspoon balsamic vinegar (or red wine vinegar)
- 2 ounces bittersweet chocolate (finely chopped)

For topping

- 2 cups heavy cream
- 1 pound raspberries
- 3 tablespoons bittersweet chocolate (coarsely grated)

Preparation

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C Fan/gas mark 4/350°F and line a baking tray with baking parchment.
2. Beat the egg whites until satiny peaks form, and then beat in the sugar a spoonful at a time until the meringue is stiff and shiny. Sprinkle over the cocoa and vinegar, and the chopped chocolate. Then gently fold everything until the cocoa is thoroughly mixed in. Mound on to a baking sheet in a fat circle approximately 23cm / 9 inches in diameter, smoothing the sides and top. Place in the oven, then immediately turn the temperature down to 150°C/130°C Fan/gas mark 2/300°F and cook for about one to one and a quarter hours. When it's ready it should look crisp around the edges and on the sides and be dry on top, but when you prod the centre you should feel the promise of squidginess beneath your fingers. Turn off the oven and open the door slightly, and let the chocolate meringue disc cool completely.
3. When you're ready to serve, invert on to a big, flat-bottomed plate. Whisk the cream till thick but still soft and pile it on top of the meringue, then scatter over the raspberries. Coarsely grate the chocolate so that you get curls rather than rubble, as you don't want the raspberries' luscious colour and form to be obscured, and sprinkle haphazardly over the top, letting some fall, as it will, on the plate's rim.

Source: <https://www.nigella.com/recipes/chocolate-raspberry-pavlova>



My FAVORITE GINGERBREAD COOKIES

Recommended by Ann-Marie Colacino



Ingredients

- 10 Tablespoons (2/3 cup; 145g) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
- 3/4 cup (150g) packed light or dark brown sugar
- 2/3 cup (200g) unsulphured molasses
- 1 large egg, at room temperature
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 3 and 1/2 cups (437g) all-purpose flour (spoon & leveled)
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 Tablespoon ground ginger (yes, 1 full Tablespoon!)
- 1 Tablespoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
- optional: easy cookie icing or royal icing

Preparation

1. In a large bowl using a hand-held mixer or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat the butter for 1 minute on medium speed until completely smooth and creamy. Add the brown sugar and molasses and beat on medium high speed until combined and creamy-looking. Scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl as needed. Next, beat in egg and vanilla on high speed for 2 full minutes. Scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl as needed. The butter may separate; that's ok.



2. In a separate bowl, whisk the flour, baking soda, salt, ginger, cinnamon, allspice, and cloves together until combined. On low speed, slowly mix into the wet ingredients until combined. The cookie dough will be quite thick and slightly sticky. Divide dough in half and place each onto a large piece of plastic wrap. Wrap each up tightly and pat down to create a disc shape. Please see photo and description above in my post. Chill discs for at least 3 hours and up to 3 days. Chilling is mandatory for this cookie dough. I always chill mine overnight.
3. Preheat oven to 350°F (177°C). Line 2-3 large baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats. (Always recommended for cookies.) Set aside.
4. Remove 1 disc of chilled cookie dough from the refrigerator. Generously flour a work surface, as well as your hands and the rolling pin. Don't be afraid to continually flour the work surface as needed- this dough can be sticky. Roll out disc until 1/4-inch thick. Cut into shapes. Place shapes 1 inch apart on prepared baking sheets. Re-roll dough scraps until all the dough is shaped. Repeat with remaining disc of dough.
5. Bake cookies for about 9-10 minutes. If your cookie cutters are smaller than 4 inches, bake for about 8 minutes. If your cookie cutters are larger than 4 inches, bake for about 11 minutes. My oven has hot spots and yours may too- so be sure to rotate the pan once during bake time.
6. Allow cookies to cool for 5 minutes on the cookie sheet. Transfer to cooling rack to cool completely. Once completely cool, decorate as desired.
7. Cookies stay fresh covered at room temperature for up to 1 week.

Source: <https://sallysbakingaddiction.com/best-gingerbread-cookies/>



CHEWY GINGER MOLASSES COOKIES

Recommended by Ann-Marie Colacino



Ingredients

- Butter: Completely softened to room temperature (not melted, or else it will not cream properly with the sugars)
- Sugars: I use half granulated (white) sugar, half packed brown sugar, plus extra sugar for rolling the dough balls.
- Molasses: I typically opt for “original” (versus dark) unsulphured molasses.
- Eggs and baking soda: Two soft and chewy cookie staples.
- Flour: I typically use all-purpose flour for this classic recipe, but white whole wheat flour can work too.
- Spices: We will use a mixture of ground ginger, cinnamon and cloves. Feel free to tinker around with the spice proportions to taste.
- Salt: To bring out all of those delicious flavors.

Preparations

1. Preheat oven. Heat oven to 350°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat, and set aside.
2. Whisk together dry ingredients. Flour, soda, ground ginger, cinnamon, cloves, and salt.

3. Cream together butter and sugars. Using a separate mixing bowl, either with a stand mixer or a hand mixer, cream together the softened butter and sugars on medium-high speed until the mixture is light and fluffy and a pale yellow color, about 2 minutes, scraping down the sides occasionally as needed.
4. Mix in the remaining wet and dry ingredients. Mix in the eggs (one at a time) and molasses, and beat on medium-low speed until each is combined. Gradually add in the dry ingredient mixture and beat until it is evenly incorporated.
5. Chill the dough. Transfer the dough to an airtight container and refrigerate for at least 2 hours, or until the dough is completely chilled. I know — the extra chilling time is substantial, and very tempting to skip. But this particular dough, with all of its butter and molasses, really does need a thorough chilling to prevent the cookies from spreading. Worth the wait, I promise. :)
6. Roll the dough balls. Once the dough is chilled and firm, roll the dough into small balls, about 1-inch in diameter. Fill a separate small bowl with sugar, and roll each ball in the sugar until it is completely coated. Place dough balls on the prepared baking sheet.
7. Bake. Bake for about 8-10 minutes, until the cookies begin to slightly crack on top. (They will crack more while cooling.) Remove from the oven and let cool for 4-5 minutes. Then transfer the cookies to wire racks to cool completely.
8. Serve. Serve warm and enjoy, or store in a sealed container for up to 4 days. Or freeze for up to 3 months.

Source: <https://www.gimmesomeoven.com/chewy-ginger-molasses-cookies/>



LINDT DARK CHOCOLATE GINGERBREAD

Recommended by Teddy Cameron



Ingredients

- 10 Tablespoons (2/3 cup; 145g) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
- 3/4 cup (150g) packed light or dark brown sugar
- 2/3 cup (200g) unsulphured molasses
- 1 large egg, at room temperature
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 3 and 1/2 cups (437g) all-purpose flour (spoon & leveled)
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 Tablespoon ground ginger (yes, 1 full Tablespoon!)
- 1 Tablespoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
- optional: easy cookie icing or royal icing

Preparation

Gingerbread

1. Preheat oven to 325°F (165°C) 20 minutes before you are ready to bake the cookies.
2. In a microwave-safe bowl, break chocolate into small pieces. Heat in microwave for 30 seconds at a time, stirring in between, until chocolate is just melted. (If you heat the chocolate too high it will take on a burnt flavour.) Alternatively, melt chocolate in a bain-marie on the stovetop. Set aside to cool slightly.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, cocoa, spices, salt, baking powder and baking soda and set aside until ready to use.
4. In bowl of an electric mixer, cream together butter and sugars on medium speed until light and fluffy (about 3 minutes). Add eggs, molasses and melted chocolate and mix until combined. Add half the dry mixture and combine until just incorporated, then add the rest and combine until just incorporated, scraping down bowl as necessary. Do not overmix.
5. Divide dough in two and wrap in plastic before flattening into discs. Chill for one hour or overnight.
6. Leave dough out for about 10 to 15 minutes, until just slightly warmed up, before rolling out to 1/4-inch thickness on a lightly floured piece of parchment the size of your baking sheet.
7. Using template provided and working in batches, cut dough along the template lines using a sharp chef's knife, leaving 1 inch between each shape. Transfer to baking sheet and chill for 15 minutes in the fridge. Repeat with remaining dough until template is complete.
8. For smaller cookies, roll dough on a lightly floured work surface and transfer to a parchment lined baking sheet. Keep cookies of similar size on one sheet to ensure even baking. Chill for 15 minutes, then bake for 10 to 20 minutes, depending on the size of your design. Cookies should be quite firm but not burnt on the edges.
9. Assemble and decorate the gingerbread house using a piping bag filled with royal icing, fit with a small round tip.

Royal icing

1. Place sugar and meringue powder in the bowl of an electric mixer and set on low speed. Pour water in slowly, using enough to create the desired consistency of thick honey. You may need to add in a few drops of water or 1 to 2 tbsp of confectioner's sugar, since royal icing can be too thick or too thin depending on several factors. Once well blended, turn mixer to medium-high and beat for about 7 minutes.

2. Add food colouring one drop at a time to achieve desired colour. You can also divide the recipe into parts to create different colours.
3. Use immediately or store in the fridge in an airtight container for up to 2 days.

Source: <https://lindttheseason.ca/en/lindt-dark-chocolate-gingerbread/>