



## Gingerbread Houses

To make 12-18 biscuits you will need...

**300 g** plain flour (plus extra for dusting)  
**½** teaspoon of salt  
**2** teaspoons of bicarbonate of soda  
**1** heaped teaspoon of ginger  
**½** teaspoon of cinnamon  
**¼** teaspoon of mace  
**100 g** butter  
**100 g** soft brown sugar  
**75 ml** maple syrup

You will also need a house-shaped biscuit cutter plus assorted smaller cutters and a few boiled sweets (hard candy) in your favourite colour/flavour for the windows

This recipe makes a crisp biscuit rather than a soft cookie, so is ideal for the more ambitious to construct 3-D gingerbread houses.

### Making the dough...

1. Heat the butter and sugar in the maple syrup until they've dissolved.

While the liquid cools slightly, sieve the flour, salt, bicarbonate of soda and spices into a large bowl (a). Mix the sugary liquid into the dry ingredients and mix to form a dough. Then wrap the dough in clingfilm and rest it in the fridge for at least an hour (b).

2. Line a baking tray with parchment paper then lightly dust your rolling pin and work surface with flour.

Roll out the dough to a ¼-inch thickness and cut out the gingerbread houses, re-rolling any off-cuts as you go. Use the small cutters to make a little window in each house before placing them on the baking tray, allowing space for them to spread.



## Creating the windows...

3. Pre-heat the oven to 180 degrees/350 Fahrenheit.
4. Double-bag the boiled sweets in freezer bags and give them a good bash with the rolling pin to crush them (little helpers will love this bit). Using a teaspoon, sprinkle a layer of the crushed sweets to fill up each 'window' in the dough (c). If you'd like to turn your biscuits into Christmas tree decorations, make a little hole at the top of each house with a skewer.
5. Bake the gingerbread for 10-15 minutes and enjoy the gorgeous scent of spice filling the kitchen (d).

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This recipe takes its inspiration from the Land of Sweets border in my Nutcracker Sampler quilt.



The spices used in gingerbread vary subtly from country to country and family to family. I've kept my spicing fairly gentle, but added a pinch of mace - a traditional old-English favourite, but nutmeg would do too - and replaced the golden syrup used in most recipes with Canadian maple syrup.

Gingerbread Houses make gorgeous gifts - wrap them in a food-safe cellophane bag and pack them into a pretty box - or, with a hanging hole made before they're baked, a sweet Christmas tree decoration.

With love from the studio,

*Nicola xx*

