

**Christmas Gingerbread Cookies w/ Icing**

* 3 cups flour
* ½ cup sugar
* 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
* 3/4 teaspoon baking soda
* 1/4 teaspoon salt
* 1 tablespoon ground ginger
* 2 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
* 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
* 1/4 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
* 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
* ½ cup brown sugar
* 1 egg
* ½ cup molasses
* 2 teaspoons vanilla
* Zest of 1 lemon

Directions:
1. In a large bowl or standing mixer, combine the dry ingredients: Flour, salt, sugar, baking soda, baking powder, salt and spices.
2. To the same bowl, add your butter, egg, brown sugar, molasses, vanilla and lemon zest. Mix until your dough comes together. Just beyond the stage seen in this photo, it'll become shiny and more like play dough.
3. Shape your dough into a log, wrap it in plastic wrap and let the whole thing rest at room temperature for 1 hour (or you can leave it out for up to 8 hours if needed.)
4. Working in two batches, roll out your dough with a rolling pin. It should be about 1/4 inch thick. If the dough sticks to your rolling pin, use just a little extra flour on the pin.
Using a cookie cutter, cut out your gingerbread men from the rolled dough. Place the cookies about an inch apart on a baking sheet lined with either silicone, parchment paper or greased. Bake for 7 to 9 minutes (depending on the size of your cookies) at 375 degrees Fahrenheit.
5. Whatever shape you choose, cool the cookies completely on a wire rack before frosting.
6. Use a small tipped pastry bag to make lines, polka dots or any other finely detailed pattern. I use 3 egg whites and 14 oz. of confectioner’s sugar. Whisk that up until it begins to form peaks and voila!