



Gingerbread Boys and Girls are a classic holiday favorite with great flavor that comes from a blend of fragrant spices and molasses. Sarah Nasello / The Forum

## Gingerbread Boys and Girls

*Servings: about 36 cookies, depending on cookie cutter size*

### **Ingredients:**

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon baking soda
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon ground nutmeg
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon ground cloves
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup unsalted butter, room temperature
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar
- 1 large or extra-large egg
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup unsulphured molasses (I prefer the mellow variety versus full-flavored)

**Directions:**

In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, spices, baking soda and salt until combined; set aside.

In the bowl of your stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream the butter and sugar together on medium speed until light and fluffy, about 2 to 3 minutes. Add the egg, vanilla and molasses and beat hard (medium-high speed) until fully combined, about 1 minute.

With the mixer on low speed, gradually add the flour mixture and mix until just incorporated.

Divide the dough in half and press each half into a disk. Wrap each disk in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 2 hours, or even overnight, until the dough is firm enough to roll out.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees and position the rack in the center of the oven. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper.

Lightly flour your work surface and rolling pin. Roll the dough out to an even thickness between 1/8 to 1/4-inch, turning the dough as you roll to prevent it from sticking and to ensure that each cookie is the same thickness. Continue to flour the surface and rolling pin as needed.

Dip your cookie cutters into flour, shake off any excess and press the cutter straight down into the dough. If the dough is soft, use an offset spatula to transfer the cut cookies onto the lined baking sheet, leaving about an inch between each cookie.

Bake for 8 to 12 minutes, depending on the size of the cookies, your oven and how soft or crispy you'd like the cookies to be (less time for softer cookies, more for crispy). The cookies are ready when they are firm to the touch and the edges are just beginning to turn golden brown.

Remove the cookies from the oven and let cool on the baking sheet for 1 to 2 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.

**To store:** The cookies can be stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 1 week, or in the freezer for several months.

**Sarah's tips:**

- Molasses is thick and sticky, but if you spray the measuring cup with cooking spray, it will slide right out when adding to the dough.
- To create a cookie ornament, use a straw or wooden skewer to make a hole at the top of the cookie.
- To decorate, use a small tip and pipe royal icing or vanilla buttercream to create various designs.

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*"Home with the Lost Italian" is a weekly column written by Sarah Nasello featuring recipes by her husband, Tony Nasello. The couple owned Sarello's in Moorhead and lives in Fargo with their son, Giovanni. Readers can reach them at [sarahnasello@gmail.com](mailto:sarahnasello@gmail.com).*