

Spiced Sugar Cookies

(recipe adapted from Susan Gold Purdy, Pie in the Sky)

Yields approx.: Four dozen 2" cookies

12 Tbsp (1- 1/2 sticks) butter, at room temperature

3/4 cup superfine sugar

1/4 cup dark brown sugar, lightly packed

2 large eggs, at room temperature

1 1/2 tsp vanilla extract

2 3/4 cups all-purpose flour, plus extra for rolling out dough

1 tsp baking powder (1/2 tsp at high altitude)

1 tsp salt

2 tsp cinnamon

1/2 tsp nutmeg

1/4 tsp cloves

1/2 tsp ground ginger

1/4 tsp black pepper

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F and divide the oven racks into thirds. Line the cookie sheets with baking parchment or a nonstick baking mat.

In the large bowl of an electric mixer, with a paddle attachment, cream the butter and sugar until well blended. Beat in the eggs and vanilla extract, scraping down the bowl and beater as necessary.

In a medium bowl, sift the flour, baking powder, spices and salt. Add the dry ingredients to the butter mixture and beat on the lowest speed until well incorporated. Remove from bowl and form the dough into a ball on a slightly floured surface. If it feels too sticky, add 1 or 2 more

tablespoons of flour, until it is easier to handle. Wrap in plastic and refrigerate until firm, about 30 minutes to an hour, or even overnight.

Work quickly with one-half of the dough at the time (keep the remaining dough in the refrigerator). Lightly flour table surface and rolling pin and roll out dough to about a 1/16-1/8 inch thickness. Cut out shapes as quickly as possible. The key here is to keep the dough as cold as possible (this helps to solve the bothersome bubble problem). Transfer cookies onto prepared cookie sheet and place in the freezer for about 15-30 minutes (this helps the cookies to keep their intended shape).

Bake cookies for 12-14 minutes, or until they look slightly golden around the edges. Make sure to rotate pans halfway through baking time for even baking. Let the cookies cool on baking sheet for a couple of minutes before transferring to a cooling rack. Let the cookies completely cool before icing.

Sugar Cookie Icing

(recipe adapted from allrecipes.com)

3 cups	confectioner's sugar, sifted
2-3 Tbsp	milk
2 Tbsp	light corn syrup
¾ tsp	vanilla extract

Assorted food coloring

Assorted sanding sugars

In a mixer bowl on low speed, beat together the confectioner's sugar and milk until smooth. Increase the speed to medium and beat in the corn syrup and vanilla extract until icing is smooth and glossy. If icing is too thick, add more corn syrup.

Divide the icing into separate bowls, if using multiple colors and add food coloring to the desired intensity. Spread icing over completely cooled cookies.