

MAMA BEARS' GINGERBREAD COOKIES

Let your imagination soar and decorate these delicious cookies with raisins, mini-chocolate chips, or candies.

Ingredients:

½ cup brown sugar	¾ teaspoon ground ginger
¼ cup butter	¾ teaspoon salt
¼ cup shortening	½ teaspoon baking soda
½ cup molasses	¼ teaspoon ground allspice
¼ cup water	2 ½ cups all purpose flour
Candies or raisins for decoration	

1. Let butter soften at room temperature.
2. Beat butter, shortening, molasses, brown sugar, and water one minute with **electric mixer**.
3. Mix in salt, ginger, soda, and allspice.
4. Beat in flour, ½ cup at a time.
5. Divide dough into two pieces. Wrap each separately in **waxed paper**. Refrigerate 2 hours.
6. Heat oven to 375°.
- 7 Sprinkle a **pastry board** with a little flour and rub some on the **rolling pin**.
8. Roll one piece of dough until it is 1/8 inch thick. Rub more flour on rolling pin to keep dough from sticking.
9. Cut dough with **bear cookie cutter** and carefully place bear shapes on **ungreased cookie sheet**. Re-roll scraps of dough to cut more cookies.
10. Repeat steps 7 through 9 with second piece of dough.
11. Now is the time to add raisins or chocolate chips, if, using.
12. Bake cookies for 10-12 minutes.
13. Remove from oven. Let cookies sit for a minute or so before removing them to a **cooling rack**.
14. When cool, cookies can be decorated with icing and candies.

Makes 36 small gingerbread bears.

From Kathy Duval, author of THE THREE BEARS' CHRISTMAS