

Sweet Trees for the Holidays

While this year may feel a little different, there are some traditions that will keep our spirits bright, our bellies happy and bring a smile to our faces. This holiday season, [PASSION FOR CAKES](#) shares their best gingerbread holiday recipe. Keep the kids busy, make an edible treat and create a gingerbread tree that the whole family can enjoy for the holidays.



Holiday Gingerbread Cookie Tree

Ingredients:

- 3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp Baking Soda
- 2 tsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 1/2 cups molasses
- 2/3 cup soft (not melted) butter
- 1/3 cup boiling water
- Optional decoration– Icing sugar, chocolates, dragees, cinnamon hearts or other favorite candies

Directions:

Combine molasses, softened butter and water in large bowl. Stir in flour, baking soda, spices, and salt. Blend well. Should be soft enough to separate and roll into 4 large dough balls. Cover and chill in fridge for 3-5 hours (or overnight if you prefer).

Bring dough out of fridge about 30 minutes before you're ready to roll! Pre-heat the oven to 375°F. Knead dough and then on a baking sheet lined with a non-stick mat or parchment paper, roll dough with floured rolling pin to 1/4-inch thickness. Used various sized star cookie cutters. If you don't have any, print one out and then scale to required sizes. Note – if you'll be planning on the optional step 3 of assembly – then now is the time to make a hole in the middle of your cookie - the hole should be just slightly larger than your dowel/straw – which will later serve as a stabilizer for transport.

Place cookies in middle rack of oven and bake for about 10-12 minutes (until cookies are cooked on the edges). Bake as many layers as desired. The more varying sizes of cookies – the taller the Gingerbread tree.

Royal Icing

Royal icing is the perfect decorating item your gingerbread tree. You can make the recipe below which calls for Meringue powder and cream of tartar - or for a quick time saver – go ahead and buy the pre-made royal icing at your local grocery store (usually sold in the bakery department around Christmas time) no one will ever know, and you'll save yourself the extra hassle! Some recipes call for egg whites instead – which I recommend if you're an experienced baker and want the extra challenge!

Ingredients:

- 1 bag (two pounds) of powdered sugar
- 6 Tablespoons meringue powder (online or from your local bakery)
- 1/2 teaspoon cream of tartar (online or sometimes at your local grocery store)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 14 Tablespoons water
- pinch salt

In a large grease free mixing bowl, combine all the dry ingredients together and then add the vanilla and slowly add the water a little bit at a time (reserving about 3 Tablespoons of water) – mixing as you go. Once all ingredients are wet, beat with a mixer on high for several minutes until the royal icing is stiff and fluffy. Add remaining water a little bit water at a time to thin the icing to your desired consistency. Should be thick enough to pipe and not to thin or runny – add remaining water as needed.

Always store Royal icing in an airtight container. If it's too thin – add icing sugar, if too thick – add little dash of water little bit at a time.

Assembly Instructions

Once you have all your cooled gingerbread stars and royal icing ready, you're ready to make your edible tree.

1. Decorate each star individually and wait to completely dry (may be several hours or overnight depending on your royal icing consistency). Patience is key here 😊
2. Find a gingerbread base (large cutting board, large platter, or foodsafe cardboard cake board).
3. OPTIONAL: If you're transporting your tree or giving as a gift – recommend a wooden base with a vertical dowel in the center or alternate you could use thick cardboard and a long bubble tea straw.
4. Take your largest star and use as the base. Then add cookies by largest to smallest, and rotate/offset them slightly to get the tree branch look.
5. Decorate with Icing sugar, sugar base and your favorite chocolate boxes if desired.
6. Share and Enjoy!

Recipe, Template, and Instructions provided by Corina Ludwig corina@passionforcakes.com

Questions? Reach out anytime. I'd love to hear from you. Send me a picture of your finished tree and I'll showcase it on my website... <https://www.passionforcakes.com> Victoria, BC | Custom cake designs for special events.