

Gingerbread Christmas Trees

A message from Monika, our Director of Curriculum - "Making these Christmas trees is one of my favourite Christmas traditions. They are a perfect gift and can be either eaten or displayed to make a room smell like Christmas!"

Ingredients for approximately 8 trees:

- ¼ cup clear honey
- 80g butter
- ½ cup fine light brown sugar
- 2 and ¼ cup all purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- mixed ground spices (2.5 tsp cinnamon, 1 tsp ginger, 1/3 tsp cloves, 1/3 tsp cardamom, ½ tsp allspice, ½ tsp nutmeg, ½ tsp black pepper)
- 1 teaspoon cocoa powder
- 1 egg

Preparation:

Melt honey, butter and sugar in a pan on low heat and leave to cool down. Add to the rest of the ingredients and knead/mix the dough thoroughly. If it is crumbling too much, add a bit more honey and knead through. If it is too sticky to roll, put in in the fridge for about half an hour.

Roll the dough out to a thickness of 2-3mm. Cut out star shapes in 4-5 different sizes, two stars of each size for each tree (so a total of 8-10 stars per tree). Bake in 180 degrees Celcius for 7-8 minutes (until they start to brown) and cool on a flat surface or a rack. The biscuits will be soft immediately after baking but should firm up within minutes. They will then gradually soften up (in few days) as they absorb moisture from the air. Make sure not to burn them as they can turn quite bitter!

When the biscuits are cooling down, prepare the royal icing by mixing 1 pasteurised egg white with at least 2 cups of icing sugar. (You can replace the egg white with 3 teaspoons of lemon juice for an extra tingly flavour). Keep adding more icing sugar and mixing vigorously until the icing has a consistency of a thick cream (you should be able to draw a pattern with a line of the icing and it should be thick enough not to drip everywhere).

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Pipe out a blob of icing on one of the biggest stars and place another one on top of it, pressing slightly. Then put another blob on top and put the next-in-size star on top of the other two. Keep working your way to the top of the trees. You might want to give it a few minutes to dry out in between the layers to make sure the trees are straight. Put the last smallest star vertically on top of the tree (see photos).

Decorate your trees with the remaining icing and any edible decorations you like! You can add few drops of colouring to the icing to make the tree green, you can put small edible pearls as Christmas tree baubles – the sky is the limit!

Happy Holidays!

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