



In the Kitchen

with Barb Agee ~ December 2015

Sugar and Spice and Everything...Ginger!

Ginger is one of the most widely used spices in the world. Liven your holidays with spicy ginger treats such as cookies, breads, cakes, sorbets and punches.

Ginger Mounds

¾ cup shortening
1 cup granulated sugar, plus sugar for rolling balls
¼ cup molasses
1 teaspoon grated fresh ginger
1 egg
1 tablespoon crystalized ginger, finely chopped
2¼ cups flour
¼ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon baking powder
¼ teaspoon cloves

1 teaspoon ground ginger
1 teaspoon cinnamon
½ teaspoon nutmeg
¼ teaspoon allspice
1 pear, peeled and cut into 8 slices
One 12 ounce can of root beer



Topping

1 container mascarpone cheese
⅓ cup heavy whipping cream
¼ cup powdered sugar
1 tablespoon root beer from poached pears

Blend shortening and sugar together. Stir in molasses, fresh ginger and egg. In a small bowl mix crystalized ginger into flour and coat well. To the flour, add salt, baking soda, baking powder, cloves, ginger, cinnamon and nutmeg, allspice and mix together. Add dry ingredients to the sugar mixture. Form dough into walnut size balls; in a small bowl roll balls in sugar. Place on a baking sheet 2-inches apart. Bake at 375°F for 8 to 10 minutes. Remove from oven just when the cookies crack open on their tops. Cool for 5 minutes and remove cookies to a cooling rack.

While cookies bake, in a skillet poach pear slices in root beer on medium-low until slices pierce easily with a fork, about 10 minutes. Remove pear slices to a cutting board. Cut into ⅓-inch chunks.

In a large bowl, with an electric mixer prepare the Topping. Whip mascarpone cheese, whipping cream, powdered sugar and root beer until thick and fluffy. Fold in ½ cup of chopped pears. Top each cookie with a generous teaspoon of topping; place a chunk of pear in the center. *Makes 48*

Lemon-Ginger Molasses Cake

½ cup (1 cube) unsalted butter, at room temperature
½ cup light brown sugar, lightly packed
2 large eggs, at room temperature
½ cup unsulphured molasses
2 teaspoons grated lemon zest +extra for serving
1½ cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons ground ginger

½ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon kosher salt
½ cup whole milk
⅓ cup small-diced crystallized ginger + extra for serving
1 cup whipping cream, for topping
1 tablespoon powdered sugar, for topping

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease an 9-inch round baking pan, line with parchment paper, then grease and flour the pan. In the bowl of the electric mixer cream the butter and sugar on medium speed for 3 to 5 minutes, until light and fluffy. Scrape down the sides with a rubber spatula. Add the eggs, one at a time, then the molasses and 2 teaspoons of lemon zest; mix until combined. (The batter may look curdled). Whisk the flour, ground ginger, baking soda and salt together. With the mixer on low speed, slowly add the dry ingredients, alternating with the milk, scraping down the sides. Mix until smooth. With a rubber spatula, fold in the ⅓ cup crystallized ginger. Pour batter in the prepared pan and bake for 25 to 30 minutes or until a toothpick just comes out clean. Turn out onto a baking rack and cool completely. When ready to serve, whip the cream adding the powdered sugar. Spread the whipped cream over the top of the cake and sprinkle with crystallized ginger and grated lemon zest.

Spicy Cranberry Gingerbread

3 cups (~ 16 ounces) fresh cranberries
¾ cup granulated sugar
2 tablespoons water
½ cup (1 cube) butter
⅔ cup brown sugar
½ cup whole milk
½ cup molasses
¼ cup honey (may use Lyle's Golden Syrup)
2 cups all-purpose flour

1 tablespoon ground ginger
½ teaspoon cinnamon
½ teaspoon baking powder
¼ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon ground black pepper
1 tablespoon ginger, freshly grated
1 tablespoon crystallized ginger, finely chopped
2 large eggs

Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray a 9 x 9-inch baking pan with vegetable spray. Line the pan with parchment paper and spray the paper.

In a saucepan over medium heat, add the cranberries, sugar and water. Stir until sugar dissolves and the cranberries begin to soften. When half of the cranberries have popped open, remove from heat. Transfer to a bowl and refrigerate while make the remainder of the recipe. In a second saucepan over medium heat, add butter, brown sugar, milk, molasses and honey. Heat until fully warm and sugar is dissolved. Remove from heat. Do not let boil.

In a large bowl, whisk the flour, ground ginger, cinnamon, baking powder, baking soda, salt and pepper together. Stir in the butter mixture; add the fresh and crystallized ginger. Mix in the eggs, one at a time. Pour the batter into the prepared pan. Carefully spoon the cranberry mixture on top of the batter in an even pattern, making sure to spoon the cranberry mixture next to the sides of the pan. Bake for 45 to 50 minutes until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Let cool before removing from the pan to a serving platter.

Chocolate Gingerbread Yule Log

5 eggs, separated
¾ cup cake flour
1½ teaspoon ground ginger
1½ teaspoon cinnamon
¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon pepper
⅓ cup brown sugar
¼ cup molasses
¼ cup canola oil
1 tablespoon fresh gingerroot, grated
⅛ teaspoon cream of tartar
¼ cup granulated sugar
Baking cocoa

Filling

1 8 ounce carton mascarpone cheese
⅓ cup sifted powdered sugar
2 tablespoons heavy whipping cream
⅛ teaspoon salt
¼ cup crystallized ginger, finely chopped
¼ cup dried cranberries, coarsely chopped
¼ cup semisweet chocolate chips, coarsely chopped

Buttercream

2 egg whites
½ cup sugar
⅛ teaspoon salt
¾ cup unsalted butter, softened and cut into 8 pieces
4 ounces high-quality milk chocolate, melted and cooled

Place egg whites in a large bowl; let stand at room temperature 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line bottom of a greased 15x10x1-inch baking pan with parchment paper. Grease paper. Sift flour, spices and salt together in a small bowl; set aside.

In a large bowl, beat egg yolks until slightly thickened. Gradually add brown sugar, beating on high speed until thick. Beat in molasses, oil and fresh ginger. Fold in flour mixture. Add cream of tartar to egg whites; beat on medium speed until soft peaks form. Gradually add sugar, one tablespoon at a time, beating after each addition. Beat on high until stiff glossy peaks form. Using a large whisk, fold in a fourth of the whites into the batter, then fold in remaining whites. Transfer to the prepared pan, spreading evenly. Bake for 10 minutes or until top springs back when lightly touched. Cool 5 minutes. Invert on a towel that has been dusted with cocoa. Peel off paper. Roll up cake in towel jelly roll style. Cool completely on a wire rack.

For filling, in a bowl mix mascarpone, powdered sugar, cream and salt just until blended. Stir in in ginger and refrigerate. For buttercream, place egg whites, sugar and salt in a heatproof bowl; whisk until blended. Place bowl over simmering water in a saucepan over medium heat. Whisking constantly, heat mixture until a thermometer reads 160°F, about 2 minutes. Remove from heat. With a hand mixer, beat on high speed until stiff glossy peaks form and mixture has cooled, about 5 minutes. Gradually beat in butter a two pieces at a time until smooth. Beat in chocolate.

To assemble, unroll cake and remove towel. Spread filling over to within ¼ inch of edges. Roll up without the towel. Transfer to a platter. Spread buttercream on cake. Refrigerate loosely covered until ready to serve. *Serves 16*