

GINGERBREAD RECIPE

Firstly, you will need...

- 645 grams (approx. 5 cups) unsifted all-purpose flour
- 2 ½ teaspoons ground ginger
- 1 ¼ teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 190 grams (approx. 1 cup) shortening
- 195 grams (approx. 1 cup) granulated sugar
- 1 egg
- 250ml (approx. 1 cup) maple syrup
- 2 tablespoons white vinegar

and also a...

- Your chosen *Bitesize by Casey* stencils cut out
- Large bowl
- Electric mixer with a paddle attachment (optional)
- Rolling pin
- Knife (with a long blade, if possible)
- Baking tray
- Reusable baking mat or baking paper
- Reusable ziplock bag or plastic wrap
- Cake board or something similar to construct your design on
- Piping bag

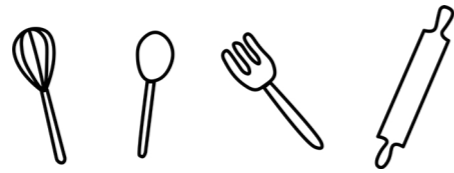
Wait, what about the *glue*?

We use *Royal Icing* as the glue to connect all the pieces together. We recommend keeping it simple and getting a *Royal Icing* packet mix - that's what we do. However, if you want to make it yourself you can find great recipes online - more power to you!

Alternatives to *Royal Icing* are melting chocolate or caramel which will typically be quicker drying options. (We've put more info on the *Royal Icing* thickness towards the end of the recipe.)

Ahhh, so you don't have an *electric mixer* with a *paddle attachment*?

Neither does Casey's brother, so he tried mixing it with a spoon and we know it can be done! You are in for a bit of an arm workout so we would definitely suggest softening your shortening before getting started if you are taking this path.



Now, let's make that *dough*!

1. Mix flour, ginger, cinnamon, baking soda and salt together in a large bowl. Set aside.
2. Chop up the shortening into chunks then using an electric mixer with a paddle attachment, mix the shortening with the sugar (medium speed) until well combined.
3. Add the egg and mix (medium to high speed) until light and fluffy. Scrape down the sides of the bowl as needed
4. Add the maple syrup and vinegar. Mix well (medium speed) and scrape down sides as needed.
5. Turn the electric mixer to a low speed and gradually add the flour mixture until well combined.
6. Remove the dough and press lightly into a mound. Wrap tightly in plastic wrap (we use resealable plastic bags). Place in the refrigerator for a few hours (or into the freezer to keep for a longer time)

Time to *bake*!

1. Preheat oven to 190°C (375°F)
2. Sprinkle flour onto a baking sheet (we like to use reusable baking mats) and roll out your chilled dough evenly, approx. 3mm in depth
3. Lay your *Bitesize by Casey* stencils on the dough and cut around the edges of the stencils using a long knife. Remove the stencils and pull up the excess dough around your cut outs.

TIP! If you remove the dough from the inner stencil cuts (eg. windows or doors, labelled "cut me out" on your *Bitesize by Casey* stencil) before placing the dough in the oven, you will get puffy cloud-like edges.

However, if you would like your design to have a crisp sharp look then leave the dough in place during the baking time and carefully cut them out after you remove your pieces from the oven. Make sure you cut while the dough is still warm and soft!

ANOTHER TIP! Instead of picking up the pieces one by one to place them onto your baking tray, roll and cut your dough directly on a baking sheet, that way you can then slide onto your baking tray into the oven. That will save you from deformed shapes.

4. Bake for approx. 10 minutes (or until lightly brown around the edges)
5. Once you remove the gingerbread from the oven, slide the baking sheet onto a flat surface.

ONE MORE TIP! Your dough will likely expand in the oven due to different factors (e.g. amount of leavening ingredients, thickness of dough) so it is a good idea to check the size of your pieces against the stencil after baking.

A little puffing up is fine, but if there is a dramatic size difference you can cut the shape down to size while the dough is still warm. Otherwise you might have some construction woes.

REMINDER! If you decided to leave your dough for the inner stencil cuts in place for a sharp look, use your knife to recut all of the inner stencil shapes while the dough is still warm.

The dough will harden slightly as it cools and will become harder to cut later, so we recommend getting this done quickly, but, of course, carefully!

6. Allow to cool completely and then hey, hey! We are ready to start decorating and assembling!



Let's talk *Royal Icing*!

We deal with three variations in the thickness' of icing, each serving a different purpose:

1. GLUE

This is the thickest consistency that you will work with and will serve as the glue that holds your bitesize pieces together. You know you have the right consistency when you can stand a spoon upright in the mixture.

2. DETAILS & LINES

This consistency will serve you to create detailed lettering, flowers, lines etc. Add small amounts of water to your glue mixture (we add less than half a teaspoon at a time) and mix into a smooth paste. You know you have the right consistency when your mixture runs off your spoon like thick honey.

3. FLOODING

This is the thinnest consistency you will work with and will serve you to cover larger areas with beautiful smooth icing. Add small amounts of water to your glue mixture as above and mix into a smooth flowing paste. You will know you have the right consistency when the mixture flows off your spoon and smoothly melts into the puddle below.