

Gingerbread Dough

Preheat the oven to 375

In a large pot on low heat, melt

1 cup vegetable shortening

1 cup granulated sugar

1-cup dark molasses

Remove from heat and mix in

1 tsp. Baking soda

1/2 tsp. Salt

1 tsp. Ground ginger

1 tsp. Ground nutmeg

2 tsp. Ground cinnamon

Stir in thoroughly 1 cup at a time

4 to 5 cups sifted all-purpose flour (I have found that 4 cups works out well)

Mix and knead all the ingredients until the dough is even in color and smooth, not crumbly or dry. Form dough into a log, and divide the log into pieces. Wrap the other pieces in plastic wrap to keep them from drying out while you are working with the other piece. Bake from 10 to 14 minutes, until it is a nice reddish brown color. You should be able to touch the cookie and not leave an imprint.

Royal Icing

4 cups (1 pound) powdered sugar

3 tbs. meringue powder

Add 6 to 8 tbs. warm water

With an electric mixer, blend the ingredients on low speed, then beat on high speed for 6 to 8 minutes, or until the mixture holds a stiff peak. If the icing is too thick, add a little more water (1 tsp. at a time). You will want it to hold a peak but not be so stiff that you can't push it through a decorating tip.

Marzipan Clay

8 ounces almond paste
1/2 cup marshmallow Fluff
1tbs. Light corn syrup
1tsp. Almond extract
1 1/2cups Confectioner's sugar

Mix almond paste, marshmallow Fluff, light corn syrup, and almond extract in a mixing bowl. Knead in confectioner's sugar a little at a time to form a smooth clay not sticky to the touch. Color accordingly and use corn syrup sparingly to join pieces. Store in airtight container.

Snowman

Stir together 1/4 cup of royal icing and 2 tablespoons of confectioner's sugar. Add 2 or more tablespoons of confectioner's sugar and knead mixture until it is like Play-Doh, adding sugar if needed. Roll one ball of dough icing about the size of walnut. Roll two more balls in decreasing sizes. Stack the balls with a bit of royal icing between them- largest on the bottom to smallest on the top. Insert a toothpick through all three snowballs for stability. The toothpick will poke out the top. Pipe a colorful scarf around the snowman's neck and three buttons on his tummy. For his hat, pipe a small dollop of black icing evenly around the toothpick on top of his head. Push a black jelly candy onto the toothpick and into the black icing.

References

Gingerbread House by Christa Currie

Gingerbread for All Seasons by Teresa Layman

Making Great Gingerbread Houses by Aaron Morgan & Paige Gilchrist

Gingerbread Houses by Nonnie Cargas

Gingerbread Houses for Kids by Jennifer A. Ericsson

Making Gingerbread Houses by Veronika Alice Gunter

A Little Book of Gingerbread by Joanna Farro