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For other uses, see Gingerbread (disambiguation). Gingerbread refers to a broad category of baked goods, typically flavored with ginger, cloves, nutmeg, and cinnamon and sweetened with honey, sugar, or molasses. Gingerbread foods vary, ranging from a moist loaf cake to forms nearly as crisp as a ginger snap.[1] GingerbreadMain ingredientsGinger root, honey or molasses Media: Gingerbread Decorated gingerbread man Originally, the term gingerbread (from Latin zingiber via Old French gingebras) referred to preserved ginger. It then referred to a confection made with honey and spices. Gingerbread is often used to translate the French term pain d'épices (lit. 'spice bread') or the German and Polish terms Pfefferkuchen and Piernik respectively (lit. 'pepper cake' because it used to contain pepper) or Lebkuchen (of unclear etymology; either Latin libum, meaning "sacrifice" or "sacrificial bread," or German Laib for loaf or German for life, Leben). Pepper is also referred to in regional names like Norwegian pepperkaker or Czech perník (originally peprník).[2] The meaning of gingerbread has evolved over time. For centuries the term referred to a traditional European pastry, very like a modern cookie, traditionally used to make gingerbread men. In the United States the first known recipe for "Soft gingerbread to be baked in pans" is found in Amelia Simmons' 1796 cookbook, American Cookery.[3] Gingerbread men Gingerbread with royal icing Gingerbread is claimed to have been brought to Europe in 992 AD by the Armenian monk Gregory of Nicopolis (also called Gregory Makar and Grégoire de Nicopolis). He left Nicopolis (in modern-day western Greece) to live in Bondaroy (north-central France), near the town of Pithiviers. He stayed there for seven years until he died in 999 and taught gingerbread baking to French Christians.[4] It may have been brought to Western Europe from the eastern Mediterranean in the 11th century.[5] Since the 13th century, Toruń gingerbread was made in Toruń, then State of the Teutonic Order (now Poland). It gained fame in the realm and abroad when it was brought to Sweden by German immigrants. In 15th-century Germany, a gingerbread guild controlled production.[6] Early references from the Vadstena Abbey show that the Swedish nuns baked gingerbread to ease indigestion in 1444.[7] It was the custom to bake white biscuits and paint them as window decorations. In England, gingerbread was also thought to have medicinal properties.[8] 16th-century writer John Baret described gingerbread as "a kinde of cake or paste made to comfort the stomacke."[5] Gingerbread was a popular treat at medieval European festivals and fairs, and there were even dedicated gingerbread fairs.[5] The first documented trade of gingerbread biscuits in England dates to the 16th century,[9] where they were sold in monasteries, pharmacies, and town square farmers' markets. One hundred years later, the town of Market Drayton in Shropshire became known for its gingerbread, as is displayed on their town's welcome sign, stating that it is the "home of gingerbread". The first recorded mention of gingerbread being baked in the town dates to 1793, although it was probably made earlier, as ginger had been stocked in high street businesses since the 1640s. Gingerbread became widely available in the 18th century. Gingerbread came to the Americas with settlers from Europe. Molasses, less expensive than sugar, soon became a common ingredient and produced a softer cake. The first printed American cookbook, American Cookery by Amelia Simmons, contained seven different recipes for gingerbread.[10] Her recipe for "Soft gingerbread to be baked in pans" is the first written recipe for the cakey old-fashioned American gingerbread.[11] Gingerbread cake In England, gingerbread may refer to a cake or a type of biscuit made with ginger. In the biscuit form, it commonly takes the form of a gingerbread man. Gingerbread men were first attributed to the court of Queen Elizabeth I, who served the figurines to foreign dignitaries.[12] Today, however, they are generally served around Christmas. Gingerbread was a traditional confectionery sold at popular fairs, often given as a treat or token of affection to children and lovers "sweethearts" and known as a "fairing" of gingerbread – the name retained now only by Cornish fairings. This crisp brittle type of gingerbread is now represented by the popular commercial version called the ginger nut biscuit.[citation needed] "Parliament cake" or "Parlies", a very spicy ginger shortbread, were eaten (in the same way as salty snacks with beer), with whisky, rum or brandy, during midday breaks, by the members of the original (pre-1707) Scottish Parliament, in a secret backroom (ben the hoose),[13] at a tavern and shop in Bristo Street in Edinburgh's Potterrow, behind the university, run by a Mrs Flockhart, AKA Luckie Fykie, the landlady who is thought to be the inspiration for Mrs Flockhart in Walter Scott's Waverley.[14][15][16][17][18][19][20] The recipe is mentioned in Christian Isobel Johnstone's The Cook and Housewife's Manual (also known as Meg Dod's Cookery)[21] (1826) published under the pseudonym of "Mrs. Margaret Dods, of the Cleikum Inn, Saint Ronan's", evoking the character of Margaret Dods, the hostess of the Cleikum Inn in Walter Scott's novel Saint Ronan's Well (1823). It was immensely popular, and in which, she used characters Scott's to give commentary on preparing national specialties.[22][23] Parkin is a form of soft gingerbread cake made with oatmeal and treacle which is popular in northern England, originating in Yorkshire.[citation needed] Spicy gingerbread recipe, Michigan c. 1950 In the United States, this form of gingerbread is sometimes called "gingerbread cake" or "ginger cake" to distinguish it from the harder forms. French pain d'épices is somewhat similar, though generally slightly drier, and involves honey rather than treacle and uses less spice than other breads in this category.[citation needed] In Panama, a confection named yiyinbre is a gingerbread cake made with ginger and molasses; it is typical of the region of Chiriquí. Another popular confection is quequi or queque, a chewy biscuit made with ginger, molasses, and coconut.[citation needed] In Brazil, "Pão de Mel", literally meaning honey bread, is a popular treat; it consists in a type of gingerbread made with honey and other spices in small circles with a chocolate covering and can be found traditionally filled with doce de leite.[citation needed] This section needs additional citations for verification. Please help improve this article by adding citations to reliable sources in this section. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. (March 2025) (Learn how and when to remove this message) Austrian Christmas star-shaped gingerbread cookiesIn Germany gingerbread is made in two forms: a soft form called Lebkuchen and a harder form, particularly associated with carnivals and street markets such as the Christmas markets that occur in many German towns. The hard gingerbread is made in decorative shapes, which are then further decorated with sweets and icing. The tradition of cutting gingerbread into shapes takes many other forms and exists in many countries, a well-known example being the gingerbread man. Traditionally, these were dunked in port wine. At Oktoberfest in Munich, it is customary for men to buy large gingerbread cookies in the shape of a heart, with a ribbon for their sweetheart to wear around their neck. The cookies are iced with romantic phrases like "Ich liebe dich" (I love you). Gingerbread hearts from Oktoberfest In Ashkenazi Jewish cuisine, the honey cake eaten at Rosh Hashanah (New Year) closely resembles the Dutch peperkoek or the German Lebkuchen, though it has wide regional variations. In Switzerland, a gingerbread confection known as "biber" is typically a two-centimeter (approximately ¾ of an inch) thick rectangular gingerbread cake with a marzipan filling. The cantons of Appenzell and St. Gallen is famous for biber, which are artfully adorned with images of the Appenzell bear or the St. Gallen cathedral respectively by engraving or icing. In the Netherlands and Belgium, a soft and crumbly gingerbread called peperkoek, kruidkoek or ontbijtkoek is popularly served at breakfast time or during the day, thickly sliced and often topped with butter. In the Nordic and Baltic countries, the most popular form of ginger confection is the pepperkaker (Norwegian), pepparkakor (Swedish), peberkager (Danish), piparkökur (Icelandic), piparkakut (Finnish), piparkūkas (Latvian) or piparkoogid (Estonian). They are thin, brittle biscuits that are particularly associated with the extended Christmas period. In Norway and Sweden, pepperkaker/pepparkakor are also used as window decorations (the pepperkaker/pepparkakor are a little thicker than usual and are decorated with glaze and candy). Many families bake pepperkaker/pepparkakor/brunkager as a tradition. Tula gingerbreadIn Russia, a gingerbread maker was first mentioned in Kazan cadastres in 1568.[24] Gingerbread confections are called pryaniki (sg. pryanik), derived from the Russian term for 'spices'. Historically three main centers of gingerbread production have developed in the cities of Vyazma, Gorodets, and Tula. Gingerbreads from Tver, Saint Petersburg, and Moscow were also well known in the Russian Empire. A classic Russian gingerbread is made with rye flour, honey, sugar, butter, eggs and various spices; it has an embossed ornament or text on the front side with royal icing.[25] A Russian gingerbread can also be shaped in various forms and stuffed with varenje and other sweet fillings. Traditional Toruń gingerbreadIn Poland, gingerbreads are known as pierniki (singular: piernik). Some cities have traditional regional styles. Toruń gingerbread (piernik toruński) is a traditional Polish gingerbread that has been produced since the Middle Ages in the city of Toruń. It was a favorite delicacy of Chopin when he visited his godfather, Fryderyk Florian Skarbek, in Toruń during school vacation. Kraków gingerbread is the traditional style of the former Polish capital. In the Czech Republic, gingerbread is called perník and it is a popular Christmas biscuit and a decoration. Common shapes include hearts, stars and animals and gingerbread houses are also popular. Towns associated with perník include Pardubice[26] and Miletín. In Romania, gingerbread is called turtă dulce and usually has sugar glazing. A variety of gingerbread in Bulgaria is known as меденка ("made of honey"). Traditionally the cookie is as big as the palm of a hand, round and flat, and with a thin layer of chocolate. Other common ingredients include honey, cinnamon, ginger, and dried clove. Ukrainian Mykolajchyky Ukrainian Panyanky In Ukraine, medivnyk ("made of honey") means either dry honey cookie (a prianyk, also called medyanyk) or a spongy honey cake (a fruitcake). Mykolaychyky are traditional Western Ukrainian cookies or gingerbread that are baked for St. Nicholas Day and given to children.[27][28] Panyanky usually baked for Christmass eve in Eastern Ukraine. They are pink because they are colored with beet juice.[29] Aachener Printen Dutch carnival cake Ginger snaps Gingerbread Museum Lebkuchen – German honey-sweetened cake Licitar – Decorated honey biscuit from Croatia and Slovenia List of sweet breads Ontbijtkoek – Spiced rye cake Pain d'épices – French quick bread ^ The Oxford Companion to Sugar and Sweets. Oxford University Press. 1 April 2015. ISBN 978-0-19-931362-4. ^ "Pardubický perník prý dovede probouzet lásku". Novinky.cz. 2010-04-14. Retrieved 2020-12-20. ^ Wilson, Tolford (1957). "Amelia Simmons Fills a Need: American Cookery, 1796". The William and Mary Quarterly. 14 (1): 16–30. doi:10.2307/1917369. JSTOR 1917369. ^ A Dictionary of Miracles: Imitative, Realistic and Dogmatic" by Ebenezer Cobham Brewer ^ a b c Fiegl, Amanda. "A Brief History of Gingerbread". Smithsonian Magazine. Retrieved 2020-12-20. ^ Anderson, L. V. (24 December 2013). "Why Do We Shape Gingerbread Cookies Like People?". Browbeat (blog). Slate. Retrieved 24 December 2013. ^ "Annas Pepparkakor : Pepparkakans historia". Archived from the original on 2010-03-10. Retrieved 2009-11-11. ^ "What is the history of gingerbread?". eNotes. ^ "History of Gingerbread – Confectionary Chalet". Retrieved 2022-03-10. ^ Byrn, Anne (2016). American cake : from colonial gingerbread to classic layer, the stories and recipes behind more than 125 of our best-loved cakes. pp. 12–16. ISBN 9781623365431. OCLC 934884678. ^ Wilson, Mary Tolford (1957). "Amelia Simmons Fills a Need: American Cookery, 1796". The William and Mary Quarterly. 14 (1): 16–30. doi:10.2307/1917369. JSTOR 1917369. ^ Donald F. Lach (2010). "Asia in the Making of Europe, Volume II: A Century of Wonder. Book 3: The Scholarly Disciplines, Volume 2". p. 442. University of Chicago Press ^ "Ben – definition and meaning". Collins English Dictionary. Retrieved 22 March 2021. ^ Chambers, Robert (October 27, 1825). "Traditions of Edinburgh". W. & C. Tait – via Google Books. ^ Spear, Shirley. "Shirley Spear's Scottish flavours: iced gingerbread for Hallowe'en". Herald Scotland. Retrieved 21 March 2021. Parlies, or Parliament cakes, were once baked and sold on Edinburgh's streets as far back as the 1800s, earning their name from their popularity among the judges, lawyers and businessmen who enjoyed one of these thick, crunchy, ginger biscuits with a whisky, rum or brandy at midday. Perhaps the hot ginger flavour helped to keep out the cold as they walked around Parliament Square in solemn discussion about the day's business and politics. Eaten with a stiff drink, this must have been the original shivery bite. ^ Chambers, Robert (1825). Traditions of Edinburgh. W. & C. Tait. Retrieved 21 March 2021. ^ Wynn, Suzanne (2017-05-09). "Gingerbread Recipes". The Campaign for Real Farming. Archived from the original on 2021-03-10. Retrieved 21 March 2021. The old hard style of Gingerbread was known in Edinburgh as Parliament cake. The judges, lawyers and men of Parliament Square would meet for a midday break of whisky, rum or brandy accompanied by a salver of ginger biscuits or parties. Very strongly ginger-flavoured, to match the strong drink, the recipe appears in Meg Dodds (1826)...: 'With two pounds of the best flour dried, mix thoroughly one pound of good brown sugar and a quarter pound of ground ginger. Melt a pound of fresh butter, add to it one of treacle, boil this, and pour it on the flour, work up a paste as hot as your hands will bear it, and roll out in very large cakes, the sixth of an inch thick or less; mark it in squares with a knife or paper-cutter, and fire in a slow oven. Separate the squares while soft, and they will soon get crisp.' ^ Jamieson, John (1841). An etymological dictionary of the Scottish language (2nd ed.). Edinburgh: Andrew Shortrede. p. 191. Retrieved 10 May 2018. ^ The Oxford Companion to Food, Alan Davidson. Oxford University Press, 2014 [1] ^ Appleby-Donald, Eli. "Parlies or Parliament Cake – an old fashioned Scottish biscuit – The kitchen garden with Eli & Kate". The kitchen garden with Eli & Kate. Archived from the original on 2 March 2021. Retrieved 21 March 2021. Parlies or parliament cakes (to give them their Sunday name) were the creation of Mrs Flockhart (locally known as Luckie Fykie) of Potterrow here in Edinburgh. She had a little general grocer shop and tavern (which incidentally is no longer there because the student union is now there) which was allegedly visited by esteemed gentlemen of the Scottish Parliament, including the father of Sir Walter Scott, allegedly. The story says that these gentlemen would visit the shop but head through the shop into the back rooms (or ben the hoose as we would say), where they would drink whisky and eat parliament cake. Mrs Flockhart's parlies are described as crisp square cakes and she apparently offered round "snaps". So my version is not exactly accurate to hers, as mine are round, but they are tasty treats all the same. If you wanted to make yours square, you could roll the dough and cut it into squares. ^ Johnstone, Christian Isobel (1826). The Cook and Housewife's Manual, by Margaret Dods. Retrieved 21 March 2021. ^ "Johnstone, Isobel (1781–1857)". Encyclopedia.com. Retrieved 22 March 2021. ^ "Christian Isobel Johnstone". Scottish Women Writers on the Web. Archived from the original on 18 August 2020. Retrieved 22 March 2021. ^ Slovar' russkogo jazyka XI-XVII vv. Vol. 21. Moscow: Nauka. 1995. p. 31. ^ "Chef doma: Pryaniki i sbiten' Maksima Syrnikova". The Village. 14 December 2012. Retrieved 11 December 2015. ^ "Úvodní stránka". ^ Медовые николайчики к празднику — классический рецепт ^ Миколайчики ^ Від Різдва до Маланки Look up gingerbread in Wiktionary, the free dictionary. Gingerbread[permanent dead link] at the Open Directory Project Dundee gingerbread through the ages The world’s largest gingerbread town Retrieved from " For Christmas baking, you can't go wrong with a dash of ginger, nutmeg and cinnamon. The gingerbread flavor brings holiday cheer to all sorts of baked goods! 11/26 Taste of Home Total Time 40 min Servings 9 dozen From the Recipe Creator: This recipe is the best of twp worlds—gingerbread and chocolate chip cookies. Since they're combined, you don't have to choose between them. —Colleen Delawder, Herndon, Virginia 12/26 Gingerbread Snowflakes Recipe photo by Taste of Home Total Time 40 min Servings 5 dozen From the Recipe Creator: Cutting my favorite gingerbread cookie dough into snowflake shapes and decorating them with white icing was ideal for my theme get-together. I save these crunchy treats to enjoy on the way home from our Christmas tree outing. —Shelly Rynearson, Oconomowoc, Wisconsin 18/26 Taste of Home Total Time 10 min Servings 12 pancakes From the Recipe Creator: Molasses and spices turn an ordinary pancake mix into a special breakfast. These are so easy to make that you can have them any day of the week. —Trina Stewart, Yacolt, Washington 20/26 Taste of Home Total Time 30 min Servings 6 waffles (1-1/2 cups icing) From the Recipe Creator: I like to combine the sweet and spicy taste of gingerbread with the cool and dreamy taste of cream cheese frosting. It's a heavenly way to start the day! —Jannine Fisk, Malden, Massachusetts 21/26 Taste of Home Total Time 1 hour 15 min Servings 9 servings From the Recipe Creator: I prefer to bake from scratch, but this Christmasy cake mix recipe is a favorite. For a change of pace, use apples and walnuts in place of the pears and pecans. —Trisha Kruse, Eagle, Idaho 22/26 Taste of Home Total Time 15 min Servings 3 servings From the Recipe Creator: Are you in the Christmas spirit yet? If not, this special cocoa will do the trick. It’s like drinking a chocolate gingerbread cookie! —Erika Monroe-Williams, Scottsdale, AZ Nothing makes a house smell more like Christmas than the sweet and spicy aroma of a freshly baked pan of gingerbread. We're not talking about the crisp cookies or the houses covered in icing and candy. The taste of those holiday delights just can't compare to a slice of tender, richly spiced gingerbread cake. Similar to the classic cookies we love, a European cookie-like pastry was referred to as gingerbread for centuries. Recipes for this type of gingerbread were brought to America by European settlers, and molasses, which was less expensive than sugar, became a key ingredient, leading to a softer dough. In the 1700s, Amelia Simmons’ cookbook American Cookery showcased seven recipes for gingerbread; one of them being “soft gingerbread baked in pans.” This is the first written recipe for cakey, American-style gingerbread. The list of spices needed for this cake may look a bit lengthy. If you don't have all the ground spices on hand, you can substitute two teaspoons of pumpkin pie spice along with the black pepper. We know it may seem odd, but trust us—black pepper adds a subtle spiciness that brings this cake to the next level. Credit: Caitlin Bensel; Food Stylist: Torie Cox The practice of baking and sharing gingerbread originated in Europe several hundred years ago and then made its way to the South as families immigrated to the region and brought their recipes and traditions with them. Ginger from Asia and dried spices, such as cinnamon, nutmeg, mace, allspice, and cloves, arrived by ship into Southern ports and traveled inland because they were easy to transport and store. Whole dried spices kept well and retained their flavor and aroma for months. When combined with affordable sweeteners (like molasses or honey) and farmstead staples (such as butter and eggs), gingerbread could be made by home bakers when more expensive ingredients were not an option, which is why it became a wildly popular dessert. To make this dark, moist holiday cake, you'll need: Dark brown sugar: Adds a rich flavor to the cake. Molasses or sorghum syrup: Deepens the flavor and color, and adds additional moisture to the cake. Boiling water: Added to help dissolve the sugars and thin the cake batter. Cold unsalted butter: Melts into the hot water for a rich crumb. Baking soda: Helps give the cake its rise. Kosher salt: Enhances the flavor. Large egg: Binds the batter. All-purpose flour: The base of the cake. Ground ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice, and cloves: This combination adds a deep, spiced flavor to the cake; can be substituted with pumpkin pie spice. Black pepper: Adds a subtle spiciness and savory quality to the cake. Powdered sugar: For dusting. Brown Sugar-and-Ginger Whipped Cream: Adds a modern touch to this old-fashioned cake. Credit: Caitlin Bensel; Food Stylist: Torie Cox This cake comes together with a quick mix for a surprisingly simple batter. Full instructions are below, but here's a brief recap before you get started: Step 1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Whisk brown sugar, molasses, boiling water, and cubed butter until butter melts. Whisk in baking soda and salt. Let stand until lukewarm, then whisk in egg.Step 2. Whisk together dry ingredients; add to brown sugar mixture, and whisk until smooth. Pour into a greased and floured 9-inch square pan.Step 3. Bake 20 to 25 minutes. Cool in pan 10 minutes. Transfer cake to a wire rack, and cool completely.Step 4. Sprinkle with powdered sugar, and cut into 9 squares. Serve with whipped cream. This old-fashioned gingerbread can be made a few days in advance, and in fact, the texture improves at it sits. Store well-wrapped or in an airtight container at room temperature for up to three days (sans whipped cream). To get ahead of the holidays even further in advance, feel free to make this cake and freeze for up to three months for longer storage. Bring to room temperature, and it will be perfectly fresh when it comes time to serve. Dust the gingerbread cake with powdered sugar and top with whipped cream fresh before serving. Can there ever be too many gingerbread options around the holidays? We think not. From cookies to cakes, muffins or cocktails, check out these recipes to incorporate a little spice into your holiday celebrations: Editorial contributions by Katie Rosenhouse. The writer Laurie Colwin had an obsession with gingerbread, publishing a few different essays and recipes exploring its charms. In the essay that precedes this moist, cakelike rendition, from her book “Home Cooking,” she writes that it is “home food” — not fancy restaurant food, that is, but soothing cold-weather food that is simple to make, ideal for an afternoon spent holed up indoors. The essay is also a paean to Steen’s cane syrup, from Louisiana, which comes in cheerful yellow cans. Steen’s is easy to find online, if not at your local supermarket, but the recipe does not suffer if you use another brand of light molasses instead. Serve the cake plain with whipped cream, or with fruit and a dollop of crème fraîche, or glazed with lemon icing, as Ms. Colwin often did. (The New York Times) —The New York Times 2 cups (240g) King Arthur Unbleached All-Purpose Flour 1/4 cup (50g) granulated sugar 1 teaspoon baking soda 1/2 teaspoon table salt 1 1/2 teaspoons ginger* 1 teaspoon cinnamon* 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg* 1/4 teaspoon cloves* 8 tablespoons (113g) unsalted butter, melted 3/4 cup (255g) molasses, (not blackstrap) 1/4 cup (57g) water or brewed/cooled coffee 1 large eggs 1 cup (227g) buttermilk 1/2 cup (92g) mini diced ginger, optional 1 cup (128g) apricots, diced, optional Prevent your screen from going dark as you follow along. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease and flour a 9" square pan. In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the flour, sugar, baking soda, salt, ginger, cinnamon, cloves, and nutmeg. Melt the butter in a heatproof measuring cup. Add the molasses to the cup, and pour into the dry ingredients in the bowl, mixing to moisten. Add the water or coffee, stirring to combine. Whisk together the egg and buttermilk; stir into the batter. Mix in the crystallized ginger and/or apricots, if using. Pour the batter into the prepared pan. Bake the gingerbread for 30 to 35 minutes, until the cake just begins to pull away from the edge of the pan and a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean, or with a few moist crumbs clinging to it. Remove the cake from the oven and let it cool right in the pan. To avoid potential gumminess, wait about 15 minutes before slicing. Serve naked, as is; or sprinkled with non-melting sugar, confectioners’ sugar, or topped with whipped cream or ice cream. Ramp up the flavor: For even more moistness and zing, use grated fresh ginger (3 tablespoons) in place of dried ginger. Mix the grated ginger in with the butter and molasses before adding it to the recipe. For a shot of heat, stir up to 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper into the dry ingredients. 1Danielle DalyThis vodka-based cocktail is shaken up with a homemade gingerbread syrup, half-and-half, and creme de cacao to give it a creamy, spiced gingerbread flavor. Don't forget to finish it off with whipped cream and gingerbread cookies!Get the Gingerbread Martini recipe. SHOP MARTINI GLASSES2Ryan LiebeThese sparkling stars are sure to stand out on your Christmas cookie plate. Each one is filled with a cinnamon-cream cheese frosting to make them all the more delightful. Get the Gingerbread Sandwich Cookies recipe. Advertisement - Continue Reading Below3Danielle DalyOnce you make this warm spiced syrup, you'll want to stir it into a morning cup of coffee, shake it up into a cocktail, or even drizzle it over a big stack of pancakes.Get the Homemade Gingerbread Syrup recipe. 4Erica Kastner / The Pioneer WomanNot only is this homemade ice cream flavored like gingerbread, but there are actual gingerbread cookie chunks mixed right in. It would make the perfect Christmas-themed ice cream sundae.Get the Gingerbread Cookie Ice Cream recipe. Advertisement - Continue Reading BelowAdvertisement - Continue Reading Below7Erica Kastner / The Pioneer WomanWhen the weather outside is frightful, this gingerbread latte will warm you right up. It's just like the kind you might find at your favorite coffee shop, but more affordable and easy to make.Get the Gingerbread Latte recipe. 8Will DickeyThis simple holiday cake includes all the warm spices you know and love: cinnamon, cloves, and ginger. It also has rich molasses, but you can easily swap in sorghum syrup if you prefer. Get the Gingerbread Cake recipe.Advertisement - Continue Reading Below10The Pioneer WomanYou don't need to construct a whole house to make these cute Christmas cookies. Just use a house-shaped cookie cutter, frosting, and all your favorite candies. Get Ree's Gingerbread Cookies recipe. Advertisement - Continue Reading Below11Ralph Smith12Erica Kastner / The Pioneer WomanThe warm, spiced flavors of gingerbread get paired with a tangy cream cheese frosting in this impressive layer cake. It's sure to steal the show on your holiday dessert table. Get the Gingerbread Layer Cake recipe.Advertisement - Continue Reading Below14A Classic TwistOnce you combine store-bought gingersnap cookie crumbs and cream cheese into small balls, the only thing left to do is dip in melted white chocolate and decorate. It's so easy! Get the Gingerbread Truffles recipe at A Classic Twist. Advertisement - Continue Reading BelowAdvertisement - Continue Reading BelowAdvertisement - Continue Reading BelowWatch Next Advertisement - Continue Reading Below This classic old-fashioned gingerbread is a treasured old family recipe from my Great Grammie Alice. It's soft, moist and perfectly spiced with ground ginger, cinnamon, and molasses. This traditional gingerbread cake is absolutely delicious, plus quick and easy to make. Excellent for Christmas, Thanksgiving or any time of the year, you're going to fall in love with this recipe! ❤ I've tried other versions of classic gingerbread and they just don't compare to this old family recipe. I'm quite confident in saying that this is very likely THE best gingerbread recipe out there! I hope you enjoy this recipe! ❤ If you give it a try, please let me know how it turned out for you in the comments section at the bottom of the page or share a pic of your om noms on Instagram and tag @dishesanddustbunnies! ❤ This recipe is so very special to me as it was my great-grandmother Alices' recipe! She would make this for my grandfather and his brothers and sister as kids, and it's been an old family favourite for so many years! My grandmother Mary learned how to make this traditional gingerbread from my Great Grammie Alice so her husband (my grandfather) would have it just right. To me, this recipe represents love in the edible form… my grandmother loved my Papa so much that she learned precisely how to make all the recipes his mother made for him as a child. ❤ I have vivid memories of my Grammie (who I called Mum) baking this gingerbread for my sister and me as kids in the old wood stove. It made the old house smell so amazing with its fragrant cinnamon and ginger. So many happy childhood memories! Now, I make this recipe for the people I love. ❤ I really hope you can feel the love in this recipe! As I said, this gingerbread is love in the edible form… seriously… once you make it, you'll understand why! A note on Developing the gingerbread from the old family recipe book It took a little time to make sure the recipe was just right since the old recipe book had instructions that were a bit different than what we're used to these days. One example is that the oven temperature was never specified for all of the old family recipes because they used a wood stove! It didn't have a temperature control dial as the wood controlled the heat and how intense the fire was! The actual instructions in the old recipe book were to bake the gingerbread in a “moderate oven”, which in modern terms is roughly 350°F! Isn't that a neat little fact?? ❤ Rich, dark and molasses-y, with a deep ginger flavor – that's what our old fashioned gingerbread cake tastes like! And it's just the right amount of sweet and spicy. This is the kind of cake that warms you from the inside out on a cold winter day. The two unique ingredients that make this cake what it is are molasses and ginger. Cinnamon is also important for extra flavoring. You'll also need vegetable shortening, an egg, salt, all purpose flour (sifted before measuring), baking soda dissolved in water. Whipped cream is optional but makes for the perfect cake topping. At the bottom of the page, you'll find the complete instructions and recipe ingredients, but first, here's a little overview on how to make old-fashioned homemade gingerbread. Making homemade gingerbread is very simple! In a large mixing bowl, combine molasses, vegetable shortening and one egg. Next, in a separate bowl, combine your dry ingredients; flour, salt, cinnamon and ginger. Mix the dry and wet ingredients, then add a bit of baking soda dissolved in some water and combine. Pour the batter into a prepared pan (greased and parchment-lined 9˝x9˝ square pan) and bake in the oven at 350°F for 30 minutes. Allow to cool and cut into squares. Serve with whipped cream on top! Many people associate gingerbread only with gingerbread cookies (the famous gingerbread men), but classic gingerbread came first and it's different from gingerbread cookies. Classic gingerbread is known for its cakelike texture, softness, and rich and warming flavors of ginger and molasses, whereas gingerbread cookies are dense and will likely have a snap to them when you break them. They are thin, firm, crispy and chewy. Gingerbread cake (as some call it) or traditional gingerbread is soft. It's much thicker and is moist and fluffy. When serving it is cut into squares, and often topped with whipped cream. Although classic gingerbread is a cake, gingerbread and ginger cake are not the same. They get confused all the time! One of the differences is that gingerbread contains molasses while ginger cake doesn't. Gingerbread is made with fancy molasses or blackstrap molasses, which gives it a deep, rich flavor that ginger cake simply can’t match. Ginger cake is usually a standard white cake with ginger and other spices added, without molasses in the batter. It's usually assembled in layers with cream cheese frosting in between. Ginger cake is more like your traditional cakes when compared to classic gingerbread. So even though gingerbread and ginger cake have very similar names and are often confused, they're quite different! I'm working on a ginger cake recipe, so stay tuned! I'll link to it here once it's perfect! For this recipe, it's best to use ground ginger or powdered ginger for best results, just like my Grammie did. ❤ I haven't tried the recipe using fresh ginger, so unfortunately I'm not sure how it would turn out – it's best to stick with the tried and true ground ginger! For this recipe, I used regular fancy molasses. For a richer and deeper flavor, you could try using blackstrap molasses, but the traditional kind my family always used was fancy molasses. Molasses makes for a deliciously rich and moist cake! You can bake old fashioned gingerbread in a bundt pan, muffin tin (if you want to make mini gingerbread cupcakes), cake pan, or even a loaf pan. Really, any kind of baking pan will do! Just make sure to grease it lightly with butter or butter cooking spray and dust the grease with flour before adding the batter. The bake time will be about the same no matter what kind of cooking pan you use just watch it closely as it bakes. Be sure to do the toothpick test so you know when it's perfect – when a toothpick inserted into the center of the cake comes out clean then it is ready! This is a classic century-old family recipe so making too many variations will change it too much from what it's supposed to be! But here are some variations that make sense with the original recipe: You can replace the fancy molasses with blackstrap molasses to give a deeper and more intense flavor to the gingerbread. Add fresh whipped cream to the top of each slice when serving. Sprinkle some chopped walnuts on top of the slices for a complimentary flavor and crunch. Drizzle some butterscotch or caramel sauce on top of each slice Add a layer of cream cheese frosting on top Add a dusting of powdered sugar over top of the cake. Sprinkle some brown sugar over top along with a dollop of whipped cream If you can find candied or crystallized ginger, it's lovely sprinkled on top too! Old fashioned gingerbread is good both warm up, at room temperature or even chilled – it's up to you! It is nice to serve it warm with a dollop of whipped cream on top. The whip cream can be further drizzled with butterscotch or caramel sauce. Serve warm gingerbread with some vanilla ice cream on top is also a favorite. Old-fashioned gingerbread is a perfect dessert after a hearty meal like pork, chicken, or beef. It pairs well with roasted nuts or walnuts, either on the side or sprinkled on top for added crunch. For drinks, gingerbread is delicious with coffee, tea, hot chocolate, or a pumpkin spice latte. If you’re feeling fancy, try it with a glass of red wine or port. It’s also a classic treat to enjoy after Christmas dinner! To keep your leftover gingerbread fresh, store it in an airtight container at room temperature, or in the fridge if your kitchen is warm. For extra protection, tightly wrap the gingerbread in plastic wrap before placing it in the container. Enjoy within a week for the best taste, though it can stay delicious for up to two weeks if stored properly. Assuming it's stored properly, gingerbread will keep for up to two weeks in the fridge or up to three months in the freezer. If you're reheating gingerbread that's been frozen, thaw it overnight in the fridge before reheating. When you're ready to reheat, preheat your oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit and place the gingerbread on a baking sheet. Bake for 10-15 minutes, or until heated through. If you're reheating gingerbread that's been refrigerated, you can simply place it on a plate and microwave it for 30-60 seconds, or until heated through. Print Filed Under: American, Baked, By Course, By Cuisine, By Holiday, By Method, Canadian, Christmas, Christmas Baking, Christmas Desserts, Desserts, Fall Baking, New Year's Eve, Old Family Recipes, Recipes, Thanksgiving, Top Posts / Most Popular Michelle Dunster I'm a busy mom and passionate home cook, sharing comforting recipes and modern homemaking tips to add a little magick to your kitchen and make your time joyful and stress-free! This post may contain affiliate links. Please read our disclosure policy. Homemade gingerbread is full of cozy flavors and fragrant holiday aromas! This gingerbread recipe is light and moist, made with warm spices and just a touch of baked-in molasses. This gingerbread recipe is a holiday classic. It’s my go-to for breakfast, snacking, or gifting. It can be frozen and thawed for last-minute guests. Freeze the whole cake or freeze it in slices to sneak a piece whenever a craving strikes! Molasses: Choose medium or dark molasses over light for the deepest, richest molasses flavor. I would avoid using blackstrap molasses as it can overpower the flavors in the cake and won’t produce as moist of results. Spices: Just like other spice cakes, fresh is best, so check the expiration dates on all of the ingredients for the best results. Mix festive dried fruits like cranberries, raisins, or currants into the batter. Sweeten it up even more by adding a handful of mini chocolate, butterscotch, or peanut butter chips. Top with sprinkles, orange zest, or a drizzle of royal icing to turn this cake into a decadent dessert! Mix eggs with sugar, molasses, and spices. Add the remaining ingredients (full recipe below). Pour batter into a prepared pan and bake. Cool and serve with whipped cream and a dusting of icing sugar. Keep leftover gingerbread cake in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 4 days or up to a week in the fridge. Freeze portions wrapped in plastic wrap and in a zippered bag for up to 6 months and thaw in the refrigerator or at 30-second intervals in the microwave before serving. Did you make this Gingerbread for your family? Leave a comment and a rating below! Recipe adaptation Mackasey, Joan. “Gingerbread”. Recipe. Among Friends Vol II. Calgary, AB, 1989. 203. Print. Free eBook! Subscribe to receive weekly recipes and get a FREE Bonus e-book: Quick & Easy Weeknight Meals! You can unsubscribe anytime by clicking the “unsubscribe” link at the bottom of emails you receive. While gingerbread cookies are a holiday staple, don't overlook tender, richly spiced gingerbread cake. Popularized in early American cookbooks like Amelia Simmons' American Cookery, this nostalgic cake remains a holiday favorite, filling the air with the unmistakable scent of Christmas. A warmly spiced dessert baked and shared across Europe for generations, gingerbread made its way to America through immigrant families who carried their cherished recipes and traditions with them. Spices like ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves were mixed with affordable sweeteners like molasses to create this beloved treat. We serve ours with a tangy lemon sauce for a bright, citrusy touch. Not a fan of lemon? Swap for a scoop of vanilla ice cream for a decadent twist. Creating a moist, tender gingerbread cake is all about the right ingredients and techniques. For a delicious gingerbread that showcases the festive flavors of the season, keep these tips in mind: Fresh spices: Those old jars tucked away in your cabinet just won't deliver the vibrant taste you're after. Fresh cinnamon and ginger cake make all the difference in your gingerbread.Mix with care: Avoid overmixing your cake batter. Overmixing can cause gluten to develop, leading to a denser, less delicate cake. Mix just until the ingredients are combined for a tender crumb.Avoid overbaking: Keep this cake moist by baking only until a wooden pick inserted into the center comes out clean (or even with a few moist bits).Cool before slicing: Allow the cake to cool for about 30 minutes before slicing to retain moisture. Don't wait too long—serving it warm will enhance the comforting flavors and textures that make gingerbread so inviting.Get creative: Thin lemon peel strips give the cake a bright citrus flavor that contrasts the spiciness of the gingerbread, but you can also go in other creative directions. Consider adding lemon or orange zest into the batter for a citrusy touch, chopped walnuts or pecans for a nutty crunch, or dried fruits like raisins or cranberries for added texture and flavor. You an also garnish the cake with candied citrus slices or candied ginger for a spicy kick.Toppings: While we love the bright flavor of lemon sauce to contrast the richness of the cake, you can also serve this cake with a warm rum sauce, dollop of whipped cream, or scoop of ice cream for a refreshing touch. Photo by DOTDASH MEREDITH FOOD STUDIOS Photo by Annie Emery OK with tweaks Might try again I baked 45 mins and toothpick came out clean in center. While cooling the center collapsed so I was disappointed. The flavor was good and I did double the spices and used 1/4 c brown sugar and 1/4c white. Will cook 60 mins next time. Photo by BraveWhisk2832 A keeper! Worth the effort Great flavors Easy to follow I doubled the spices and loved it! First time making it turned out perfect 😁 I ended up cooking it for 45 minutes total, at which point there were some crumbs with the toothpick check still but I took it out as I prefer it to be more on the moist than dry side. After taking this photo the very middle did drop down a bit but I loved the consist