

Gingerbread Hugs: The Festive Cookie Recipe That Better Than Peanut Butter Blossoms

, I've tested hundreds of recipes, but these



OVEN
350°F

TIME
30 min

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INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups all-purpose flour: The sturdy base for our dough.
- 2... tsp ground ginger: The star of the show.
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon: Adds warmth.
- 1 tsp baking soda: For the perfect rise.
- 3/4sp ground nutmeg & 1/2 tsp ground allspice: These provide that "gourmet" depth of flavor.
- 3/2cup salted sweet cream butter: Softened to room temperature.
- 3/2cup light brown sugar: Packed tight for moisture and sweetness.
- 1/2 cup + 2 tbsp molasses: Essential for that iconic gingerbread color and chew.
- 1 large egg: Acts as the binder.
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract: To round out the spices.
- 30 Hershey's Hugs: Unwrapped and ready to go.
- Sanding sugar: For rolling (granulated sugar works too, but sanding sugar adds more sparkle).

DIRECTIONS

1. Mix : Dry Ingredients: In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, ginger, cinnamon, baking soda, nutmeg, and allspice. Set this aromatic mixture aside.
2. Cream the : Butter: Using a stand mixer or hand mixer, beat the softened butter until smooth and fluffy. Add the brown sugar and continue mixing until the mixture is light and creamy.
3. Add : Wet Ingredients: Pour in the molasses, egg, and vanilla extract. Mix on medium speed until fully combined. Don't worry if it looks a bit dark-that's the molasses doing its job!
4. Combine: Gradually add the dry ingredients to the wet mixture. Mix just until a soft dough forms. Avoid overmixing, as this can lead to tough cookies.
5. The : Big Chill: Cover the dough and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes. Pro tip: This prevents the cookies from spreading too thin in the oven.
6. Preheat & : Prep: Heat your oven to 350°F (175°C) and line your baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone mats.
7. Shape & : Coat: Scoop about 1/2 tablespoons of dough and roll into 1-inch balls. Roll each ball in sanding sugar until fully coated. Place them on the baking sheet about 2 inches apart.
8. Bake: Bake for 8-10 minutes. You're looking for the edges to be set, while the centers remain slightly soft and puffed.
9. The : Final Touch: Let the cookies rest on the pan for exactly 2 minutes. Gently press a Hershey's Hug into the center of each cookie. Transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.

SWAPS & NOTES

The Chocolate: If you can't find Hershey's Hugs, a classic Hershey's Kiss works perfectly.

For a darker flavor profile, try a dark chocolate kiss.

Butter: If using unsalted butter, add a 1/4 teaspoon of fine sea salt to your dry ingredients to balance the sweetness.

Sugar: You can use dark brown sugar instead of light brown sugar if you want an even deeper, more "toffee-like" molasses flavor.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Don't Overbake: Gingerbread is notorious for drying out quickly.

Remove them when they still look a tiny bit "underdone" in the middle; the carry-over heat will finish the job.

Timing the Hug: If you press the chocolate in too early (straight out of the oven), it will melt into a puddle.

If you wait too long, the cookie sets and the chocolate won't stick.

More recipes: [ChefManiac.com](https://chefmaniac.com)

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/gingerbread-hugs-the-festive-cookie-recipe-that-better-than-peanut-butter-blossoms/>