Sugar Cookies

Ingredients:
- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 1/4 teaspoons baking powder

Directions:
1. Beat together butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add egg and vanilla and mix until just combined. Add flour and baking powder in intervals. Dough will seem dry, but continue to mix with water until combined.
2. Divide the dough into four equal parts and shape each into a disk. Wrap with plastic wrap and refrigerate for about an hour or until firm. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Lightly grease baking sheets or line with parchment paper on a non-stick baking pan.
3. Roll out dough between two sheets of waxed paper, about 1/4 inch thick for crispier cookies and 1/3 inch thick for softer cookies.
4. Cut out shapes with cookie cutters and place on prepared baking sheets. Bake for seven to eight minutes or until the edges just start to turn a golden color. For softer cookies, do not allow the cookies to brown. Remove from oven, let cool for one minute and then transfer to wire rack. Allow cookie sheet to cool thoroughly before placing uncooked dough on it. Decorate cookies.

Gingerbread

Ingredients:
- 6 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 4 teaspoons ground ginger
- 4 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cloves
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1 1/2 sticks butter, softened
- 1 1/2 cups packed light brown sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup dark molasses
- 1 tablespoon water

Directions:
1. Whisk together the dry ingredients in a large bowl, set aside. Using an electric mixer, beat the butter and brown sugar on medium speed until fluffy and well blended. Beat in the eggs, molasses and water until the mixture is smooth. Beat half of the flour mixture into the molasses mixture until well blended and smooth. Stir in the remaining flour. Knead until well blended. Wrap dough in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least two hours.
2. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spread parchment paper on large surface for rolling. Dust the paper lightly with flour. Roll out dough to an even thickness of 1/4 inch. Rub a little flour over the surface of the dough. Place pattern pieces on the dough and use a small, sharp knife to cut out the pieces. Space the pieces on cookie sheets an inch apart from each other.
3. Bake pieces until the edges begin to darken. Bake 11 to 15 minutes for the large pieces, six to eight minutes for the small pieces. Rotate the cookie sheets halfway through for more even browning. Remove and cool for 15 minutes.

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