



HALLOWEEN GINGERBREAD MEN

Ingredients

- 300g plain flour
- 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 2 tsp ground ginger
- ½ tsp ground cinnamon
- 125g butter
- 100g soft dark brown or dark muscovado sugar
- 2 tbsp golden syrup
- 2 tbsp black treacle
- 100g royal icing
- Black edible food colour pen (optional)

Method

Heat the oven to 200C/fan 180C/gas 6. Mix the flour, bicarb, ground ginger and ground cinnamon in a bowl. Put the butter, sugar, syrup and treacle in a pan and heat gently until melted. Pour into the flour mix and combine to a dough (if it feels too stiff, add a drop of water to help bring it together). Roll out the dough on a lightly floured work-surface to about ½cm thick. Cut into biscuits using a gingerbread man cutter, then gather up the off cuts, reroll and keep cutting until you have used up all the dough. Lay onto two baking-paper-lined baking sheets and cook for 12-14 minutes until dark golden brown. Cool completely. To decorate, put the royal icing in a bowl and mix in enough water (about 1-2 tbsp) until the texture resembles toothpaste. Use a piping bag with a very thin nozzle to pipe skeleton outlines on the biscuits. Leave to set, (then add faces with an edible food colour pen or writing icing, if you like) These will keep for 3-4 days in an airtight container. If transporting to a party, put sheets of baking paper between the biscuit layers to keep the icing from being damaged.

HALLOWEEN CUPCAKES

Ingredients

- 200g caster sugar
- 200ml vegetable oil
- 2 medium eggs
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- 200g plain flour
- 20g cocoa powder
- ½ heaped tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 150g natural yogurt
- Marshmallow Meringue Icing**
- 2 medium egg whites
- 100g caster sugar
- ¼ tsp cream of tartar
- Chocolate chips

Method

Heat the oven to 180C/fan 160C/gas 4 and line a 12-hole muffin tin with cupcake cases. Beat the sugar and oil, then beat in the eggs one at a time, adding the vanilla with the last egg. Mix the flour, cocoa and bicarb, then add half to the oil mixture, beat in well before adding the yogurt, then add the remaining dry ingredients. Divide between the cases and bake for 20 minutes. Leave to cool for a couple of minutes, then transfer to a rack to cool completely. When you're ready to serve, make the marshmallow icing. Put the egg whites, sugar and cream of tartar in a heatproof bowl and put over a saucepan of simmering water. Beat the mixture for 4-5 minutes with an electric whisk, until the sugar has dissolved, the whites are puffed and warm to the touch. Remove the bowl from the pan and put on a tea towel and continue to beat for another 2-3 minutes until the mix is glossy and stiff peaks form. Spoon into a piping bag with a large, round nozzle (or simply snip off the end) and pipe onto the cupcakes. Leave the ghosts to set for a minute or two, then use the chocolate chips to add spooky faces!

