

## Flavorful Gingersnaps

Do you like your food to be both sweet and spicy? Gingersnap cookies are both because the main ingredients are almost always ginger, cinnamon, cloves, brown sugar, and molasses. The smaller, crispy gingersnaps are a plain, round cookie and a healthier choice when compared to other cookies, because they are usually lower in calories.

Ginger not only adds delicious flavor to food, but it's also full of nutrients. There are lots of different vitamins and minerals in ginger. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's MyPlate guidelines notes that ginger is considered safe and nutritious when eaten as part of a healthy diet.

Ginger is one of the most used spices in the world and comes in numerous forms. Fresh ginger root is typically light brown on the outside and pale yellow on the inside. Dried ground ginger has a fine texture and is light tan in hue. Crystallized ginger is a darker yellow to amber in hue.

Different kinds of ginger have different shelf life spans. Chopped ginger lasts only a few days, whereas a whole ginger chunk lasts a few months. Ginger powder has a long shelf life of about one year. Properly stored, crystallized ginger will generally stay at its best quality for 2 to 3 years.

Gingersnaps are a small, crispy round version of traditional gingerbread that was commonly made for Christmas in Germany. The German name for their traditional gingerbread cookie is Lebkuchen and it is rolled and cut into shapes such as gingerbread men, flowers, trees, and other shapes and then topped with icing and decorations. The traditional Lebkuchen was invented by Monks in Germany and the written history of it dates back to 1296.

There is written proof that gingersnaps made their way to the American colonies around 1805, but colonists made gingerbread recipes before then. Many colonists were immigrants from Germany or Dutch and the word "snappen" means "to seize quickly" in German, so it is believed they named the Gingersnaps. The name could also come from the sound the cookie makes when you break it.

Gingersnaps are a perfect light dessert. They pair well with coffee and tea or milk. Gingersnaps are also great when crumbled and used to create desserts crusts for bars, cheesecakes, pies, and tarts! Use them as topping for cobblers, crisps, and crumbles. Gingersnap pieces can also add crunch to ice cream, mousse, parfaits, pudding, or yogurt.

A gingersnap cookie is generally a drop cookie, which is about 1/4-inch thick with cracks in the top surface. Gingersnaps are super easy to make! Some important suggestions for making the best gingersnap cookie are to only use shortening, never butter. Also, when combining the shortening and sugar, be sure to aerate the fat. This means adding tiny pockets of air into the mixture. Creaming it together with an electric mixer or a wooden spoon will help with this step.

After making your gingersnaps, cool completely and store them in an airtight container, or they will become soft and lose their snappiness! If you end up with cookies after following these storage techniques, you can still re-bake them and make them crisp once more!

A combination of ground, crystallized, and fresh ginger can join forces to provide intense flavor in cookies. Try your hand at making gingersnap cookies with the perfect balance of sweet molasses, spicy ginger, and warm cinnamon. Yum!

Gingersnaps closely resemble gingerbread cookies. So what are the tricks for making sure you can bake gingersnaps that will have that “snap”? Try this recipe from Eden at <https://www.sweetteaandthyme.com/crisp-snappy-gingersnap-cookies/>

### **Crispy, Snappy Gingersnap Cookies**

Yield: 30 cookies

Ingredients:

3/4 cup vegetable shortening  
1 cup sugar  
1/2 cup unsulfured molasses  
2 teaspoons vanilla extract  
1 large egg, room temperature  
2 1/3 cups all-purpose flour  
2 teaspoons baking soda  
1 Tablespoon ground ginger  
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon  
1/2 teaspoons freshly grated or ground nutmeg  
1/2 cup sugar, to roll dough in  
1/4 cup turbinado sugar (raw sugar), to roll dough in

Instructions:

In a large mixing bowl with an electric mixer, cream shortening and sugar for about 3 minutes.

Add molasses, egg, and vanilla extract. Mix again until everything is combined.

In a separate large mixing bowl, whisk together the all-purpose flour, baking soda, ground ginger, ground cinnamon, and the grated nutmeg. Slowly add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients mixing until well combined.

Cover with plastic wrap and chill the gingersnap dough in the refrigerator for at least 1 hour up to overnight.

When ready to bake, preheat the oven to 350°F.

Mix 1/2 cup sugar and 1/4 cup turbinado sugar on a large plate.

Use a small cookie scoop to scoop out dough and roll gently into balls. Roll the cookie dough in the sugar on the plate until fully coated in sugar.

Place each sugar-coated cookie ball 2 inches apart on two parchment-lined baking sheets.

Bake the cookies for 6 minutes, turn the baking sheets 180 degrees for even baking, then bake for another 6-7 minutes.

Allow the cookies to cool for 5 minutes on the baking sheet before carefully transferring to a wire cooling rack to completely cool for 10-15 minutes.

Crisp cookies are best stored in a covered cookie jar or glass container. Do not store in plastic bags.

(Sources: U.S. Department of Agriculture's MyPlate, [www.amrevmuseum.org](http://www.amrevmuseum.org); [nationaldaycalendar.com](http://nationaldaycalendar.com))