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Baking cookies is a good way to kill time with a toddler. My almost-three-year-old has gotten really good at cracking eggs into a bowl and not getting shells in; and (like her mama) her favorite part of the baking process is getting to lick the spoon. Plus, cookies are perfect for bribery. Want your kid to take a nap? Promise her that if she lays in bed for a while, with her eyes closed, and tries reallllly hard to go to sleep, she can have a cookie when she wakes up. It works like 45% of the time which, with toddlers, is an amazing success rate.

These cookies came about after trying our hand at a disappointing Google recipe. My mother had gotten the gingersnap itch a few weeks ago and promised my daughter an afternoon of baking with Grammy. The recipe they used made cookies that were good (it takes a lot of work to make a truly bad cookie, I've found) but the edges were slightly dry, they were way too sugary, and despite being called "gingersnap", they were severely lacking in any real ginger or spice flavors.

So I messed around with the recipe for a few days, tinkering with the ingredients and attempting to make the cookie that sad Google recipe should have produced. The end result is this perfectly Christmassy, well-spiced cookie

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held up beautifully over a few days and didn't stale too quickly, but were sturdy enough to stack and, I suspect, will ship great. I hope you make and enjoy them this season, and if you do, please share!



Hey! Please help this little recipe newsletter grow and consider [forwarding it to someone you know](#) who loves food and trying new recipes. I'd really appreciate it!

week of december 10, 2016

recipe:

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Soft and Chewy Spiced Molasses Cookies

makes 22-24 cookies

time: 45 minutes

notes: These cookies came about after a lackluster gingersnap cookie recipe we found on Google turned out to be a disappointment. Mixing shortening with melted butter keeps the centers soft, while brown sugar adds chew to the edges. These cookies keep well when stored in a container with a tight-fitting lid, and since they're not too sweet, they go fabulously with a cup of coffee in the morning.

ingredients:

1/2 cup butter (1 stick)

1/4 cup shortening

1/2 cup white granulated sugar, plus another 1/2 cup for rolling

1/2 cup packed brown sugar (you can use light or dark)

1 egg, whisked

1/4 cup molasses

2 cups all-purpose white flour

2 teaspoons baking soda

1/2 teaspoon table salt

2 teaspoons ground cinnamon

1 teaspoon ground cloves

1 teaspoon ground ginger

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stovetop. In a large bowl, combine the brown sugar, the first 1/2 cup of white sugar, egg and molasses, and then stir in the butter and shortening mixture.

2. In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda, salt and spices.
3. Slowly add the dry ingredients to the wet, using a wooden spoon to mix. Scrape the sides of the bowl as you go.
4. Place the dough in the refrigerator to chill for half an hour.
5. When the dough is out, preheat the oven to 375°F. Set the extra 1/2 cup of white sugar in a bowl next to the dough. Using a tablespoon and your hands, form the dough into a ball and roll in the sugar to coat. Set the balls 2 inches apart on the cookie sheet.
6. Bake the cookies 8-10 minutes until the cookies have flattened out and the edges have just started to brown. Let cool on the cookie sheet before removing, about 10 minutes.

links

the best stuff I've read this month

Unboxing Videos on YouTube

My toddler is completely obsessed with ["Unboxing" YouTube videos, especially the videos where creepy, body-less hands open a \(black market!\) Kinder Egg](#). This article tries to capture the allure of "unboxing" for all ages, and the YouTube creators who are cashing in on the craze.

Free Yourself From the Frustrations of Rolling Out Cookie Dough

I shared [this "duh, why didn't I think of that" tip](#) on the [Percolate Facebook Page](#), but if you missed it there, here it is again; it's a great way to *not* find yourself scraping sticky sugar cookie dough from your rolling pin and cursing the cookie gods this holiday season.

Baking Sweets From Childhood Tales

I swooned [over this NYT](#) story, and likely so will anyone who (like me) read a lot as a child; the author writes about different foods from the stories she read growing up, and then goes about trying her hand at baking a few with her young daughter. Just beautiful.

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...December, you will very likely be in a mall food court at some stage this month, where you may very likely find yourself eyeing up a Panda Express photo menu. You can thank the intrepid eaters at the Lucky Peach for doing the dirty work here and [ranking every menu item Panda Express has to offer](#), including whether or not it bears any actual resemblance to its menu photo. Or if it's even edible.

That's it for this issue!

If you like what you've read, **please** pass it on!

If you have a recipe question, or a cool article you think should be shared here, feel free to email me directly:

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