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by Liz Robb

Ginger Shortbread Squares

Ingredients

275g butter
85g golden caster sugar
200g plain flour
A pinch of salt
Ground ginger
1 tablespoon of baking powder
2 balls of stem ginger, about 35g
2 tablespoons of golden syrup
1 tablespoon of syrup from the stem ginger jar
A few drops of vanilla extract
120g icing sugar
Chopped glace ginger

Preparation

1. Preheat the oven to 160 degrees or 140 degrees fan oven.
2. Lightly grease a baking tin, about 21cm square.
3. To make the shortbread, cut 175g of the slightly softened butter into pieces, add the caster sugar and make a pale, fluffy mixture by beating them together well in a large bowl.
4. Sift the flour, salt, baking powder and one and a half teaspoons of ground ginger together and grate the balls of stem ginger. Add everything to the butter and sugar mixture and use a knife to begin to mix them in. Next, form a dough by bringing all the ingredients together using hands lightly dusted with flour.
5. Roughly pull the dough into shape and press into the prepared tin, levelling it out with your fingers. Bake until it becomes pale brown, for 30 to 35 minutes. Leave to cool.
6. To make the icing, melt the remaining 100g of butter, cut into pieces, the golden syrup and the ginger syrup together until the butter has melted. Turn off the heat and stir in the vanilla extract.
7. Sift the icing sugar and a tablespoon of ground ginger together and add to the pan, whisking briskly until it is shiny and completely smooth. Leave to cool for 10 minutes, whisking occasionally.
8. Spoon the icing evenly over the shortbread and spread out with the back of the spoon to level it out Scatter a little chopped glace ginger onto the icing then chill in the fridge to set the icing.
9. Cut into squares or slices with a sharp knife before it is completely chilled to make the pieces easier to lift out later.

Cooks Note

I first ate iced ginger shortbread last year on holiday in the Orkney Isles; it was so delicious that I had to try making it myself!

The warming flavour of ginger makes this a great sweet winter treat. Cut into small squares, it makes a good addition to a festive buffet or to hand around at a party, or just enjoy a piece with a nice cup of tea!

Makes 25 small squares, or, if you'd prefer larger pieces, cut into 15 slices.