

A WRITER IN THE KITCHEN

with MK McClintock

Gingerbread has always been one of my feel-good treats during the winter and I certainly don't make it only over the holidays. As I was looking out the windows over the lake at the snow falling down over our corner of Montana, I could think of nothing more tempting than a slice of warm gingerbread, fresh from the oven. It was with great delight that I set all the ingredients out on the counter and began to mix this and that, enjoying the scent of molasses and spice. This recipe is a pretty classic one with a little extra spice, and would normally be served with cream. I prefer a light dusting of confectioners' sugar so the deep flavor of the bread is front and center.



Warm Winter Gingerbread

3 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
2 tsp baking powder
1 1/2 tsp cinnamon
3 tsp ground ginger

1/2 tsp fine sea salt
1/4 tsp ground cloves
1/4 tsp coarse or fine ground pepper
1/4 tsp allspice (opt for a higher quality spice)
1 1/2 tsp baking soda
1 1/2 cups boiling water
1 cup dark molasses (I like to use Grandma's brand)
1/2 cup unsalted butter, at room temp
1 cup organic sugar
2 large eggs, at room temp (may use 4 egg whites for a healthier version)
1 Tbs peeled and grated fresh ginger
2 Tbs grated lemon zest

1. Preheat oven to 350 F
2. Use a baking spray to coat a 9x13 pan.
3. Sift together the flour, b. powder, cinnamon, ground ginger, salt, cloves, pepper and allspice.
4. In another bowl, dissolve the baking soda in the boiling water. Add the molasses and allow to cool slightly to room temp.
5. With paddle attachment, combine butter and sugar and beat on medium speed until light and fluffy. Add eggs one at a time (if using egg whites, add slowly while mixing), beating constantly. Beat in the fresh ginger and lemon zest.
6. Reduce speed to low/stir and gradually add the flour mixture alternating with the molasses mixture (begin and end with the molasses). The batter will be somewhat thin.
7. Pour into pan and bake for 30-40 minutes or until done. If using a convection oven, check after 25 minutes.
8. Transfer to a rack and let cool until warm (unless you're like me and just couldn't wait).
9. Once cooled slightly, use a small sifter to coat the top of the bread. If serving with cream, serve warm.

Recipe modified from William-Sonoma