

New traditions begin with Martha Stewart Living...

Every year, Martha Stewart decorates a tree with cookies for children who visit during the holidays. Try the gingerbread recipe below to create magical (and edible!) ornaments for a very special Christmas tree and a very special new tradition.

Gingerbread-Cookie Ornaments

Makes about 20 six-inch cookies

8 tablespoons (1 stick) margarine, at room temperature
1/2 cup loosely packed dark-brown sugar
1/2 cup unsulfured molasses
3 1/2 cups sifted all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon ground ginger
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
Royal Icing (recipe follows)
Dragées, for decorating

1. Cream together the margarine and sugar. Add the molasses and mix well.
2. Sift together dry ingredients. With mixer on low speed, slowly add dry ingredients and 1/3 cup water to molasses mixture. If dough gets too stiff, mix with your hands.
3. Work dough with your hands until smooth. Turn out onto a piece of plastic wrap, form into a neat rectangle, wrap well, and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or overnight.
4. Roll out dough to just under 1/4 inch thick. Cut out as many cookies as possible (we used oversize star and moon cookie cutters).
5. Heat over to 350°. Place cookies on parchment-lined baking sheets and bake for 10 to 15 minutes, or until firm.
6. When the cookies are just out of the oven, use a bamboo or metal skewer to make a small hole 1/2 inch from top of each one to accommodate a hook or cord. After cookies cool, spread a layer of icing on each one and decorate as desired with silver dragées in assorted sizes. Reinsert skewers to keep holes open. To allow icing to set, leave cookies overnight in a gas oven with a pilot light, or for 30 minutes in an electric oven on the lowest setting.