

You can also rev-up the spices, and add ¼-½ teaspoon ground cardamom, cloves, nutmeg or allspice to suit your taste.

- 2 cups (280 g) flour
- 1½ teaspoons baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1½ teaspoons ground ginger
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 11 tablespoons (150 g) butter, salted or unsalted, at room temperature
- 2/3 cup (130 g) sugar
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- ¼ cup (80 g) mild-flavored molasses* (sometimes called 'light' molasses)
- 1 large egg, at room temperature
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- my optional step: coarse sugar crystals for coating the cookies

1. Stir together the dry ingredients.
2. In the bowl of an electric mixer, or by hand, beat the butter just until soft and fluffy. Add the sugar and continue to beat until smooth, stopping the mixer to scrape down any butter clinging to the sides of the bowl.
3. Stir in the vanilla, molasses and egg.
4. Mix in the dry ingredients gradually until the dough is smooth.
5. Divide the dough in two equal portions and roll each on a lightly-floured surface until each is about 2-inches (5cm) around. Don't worry if they're not perfect; you can neaten them up in a second.
6. Wrap each in plastic wrap then roll them lightly on the counter to smooth them out. Refrigerate, or better yet, freeze the cookie logs until firm.
7. To bake, preheat the oven to 350F (180C) and line two baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats.
8. Slice cookie dough into 1/4-inch (a scant 1 cm) rounds with a sharp knife. Dip one side and press firmly in a bowl of coarse sugar if you want (you can also use granulated sugar instead), and place [sugar-side up](#) on baking sheet, evenly-spaced apart. Leave a couple of inches, about 5 cm, between cookies since they'll spread while baking.