

An original recipe from Martha Wloyd's recipe book  
found in The Jane Austen Cookbook  
Maggie Black and Deirdre Le Faye  
(Public Library : 641.5941 BLA)

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THE JANE AUSTEN COOKBOOK

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### Martha's Gingerbread 'Cakes'

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*Take four Pints of flour rub into it 3 quarters of a pd. of butter 2 oz. of Ginger a Nutmeg, one oz. of Carraway seeds a quarter of a pint of Brandy 2 pd. of treacle, mix it altogether; & let it lay till it grows stiff then roll it out, & cut it into cakes, you may add what sweetmeats you please. (M.L., page 17.)*

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MAKES 14

7 oz/200 g/1¾ cups plain (all-purpose) flour, plus extra for dusting  
½ tablespoon ground ginger  
½ tablespoon grated nutmeg  
2 oz/50 g/4 tablespoons butter  
1 teaspoon caraway seeds (optional)  
4 oz/110 g/⅓ cup black treacle (molasses; see note at end of method)  
1 generous tablespoon brandy  
flaked almonds

Sift together the flour, ginger and nutmeg into a bowl. Rub in the butter until the mixture is like crumbs. Add the seeds, if you are using them. Set the oven to heat to 350°F/180°C/Gas Mark 4 and put the opened treacle tin in the oven to warm. As soon as the treacle is liquid, pour 4 fl oz/110 g/⅓ cup into a measuring jug and stir in the brandy; keep stirring until it is blended in.

Slowly blend the warmed treacle mixture into the spiced flour. It will make a soft, sticky dough. Turn it on to a flat plate and leave it in a cool place until firm. (Chill it if you like, but you may have trouble dislodging it from the plate.)

Dust a work surface or board lightly with flour. Roll out the dough not less than ¼ inch/5 mm thick and cut it into rounds with a 2-inch/5-cm round cutter. If the dough is difficult to cut neatly, roll the rough pieces into balls with your palms and press lightly to flatten. Arrange the biscuits (cookies) on baking parchment on a baking-sheet and top each with an almond flake. Bake for 10 minutes. Cool on the sheet until quite cold, then store in an airtight tin.

You may find the mixture easier to manage if you use half black treacle and half golden syrup.