

# Cakey Gingerbread Squares

Mary Pope

8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted butter, at room temperature  
1/2 cup sugar  
2 large eggs  
Grated zest of 1 orange  
2 1/2 cups sifted all-purpose flour  
2 teaspoons baking soda  
2 teaspoons ground ginger  
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1/2 teaspoon ground allspice  
1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves  
1 cup unsulfured molasses  
1 cup boiling water  
Confectioners' sugar, for dusting

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Butter and flour a 9-inch-square baking pan.

Using a hand-held electric mixer set at high speed, beat the butter until creamy, about 1 minute. Add the sugar and beat until light in color and texture, about 2 additional minutes. Beat in the eggs and orange zest.

Sift the flour, baking soda, ginger, cinnamon, allspice, nutmeg, salt, and cloves onto a piece of waxed paper. In a 2-cup glass measuring cup, combine the molasses and boiling water. Alternately in thirds, beat in the flour and molasses mixtures. Transfer the batter to the prepared pan.

Bake until a toothpick inserted in the center of the cake comes out clean, and the cake is shrinking from the sides of the pan, 40 to 50 minutes. Let stand on a wire cake rack for 5 minutes.

Place the confectioners' sugar in a sieve and dust over the top of the cake. Serve the cake warm or completely cooled.

*Makes 12 to 16 servings*