

COOKING FOR KIDS

Chris Avey, award-winning chef at the University of East Anglia nursery, shares some ideas for keeping the kids busy in the kitchen

Sweet treats

Kids love to decorate biscuits, so why not make some gingerbread and let them get creative with writing icing, cake-decorating pens, or just some fondant or roll-out icing and sprinkles? I don't know when they grow out of it – my girls decorated them for me and the oldest is a teenager.

This gingerbread recipe has the added advantage of being egg and dairy-free, as many children these days have intolerances to these ingredients.

The oat and raisin biscuits are a bit too rough in texture for decorating, but very easy to make so they're ideal as a 'starter' recipe for little ones.

Oat and raisin biscuits:

Cream the margarine and sugar together then beat in the egg. Sift in the dry ingredients then the vanilla essence, oats and raisins. Mix together, adding the milk if the mixture is too dry and sticky. Place spoonfuls of the mixture onto a baking sheet lined with silicone or baking parchment. Press down each spoonful slightly with a fork. Allow room for expansion!

Bake in a medium oven for about 10 minutes until just coloured. Allow to cool on the tray for 10 minutes before transferring to a wire rack. Eat and enjoy!

Shopping list

Oat and raisin biscuits:

(Makes approximately 10 biscuits)

50g margarine
125g soft brown sugar
1 egg
1 tsp vanilla essence
50g self-raising flour
1 tsp ground cinnamon
175g oats
70g raisins
some milk

Nursery gingerbread:

(Makes approximately 8 gingerbread people)

175g self-raising flour
1 tsp ground ginger
70g margarine
75g soft brown sugar
2 tbsg golden syrup

Nursery gingerbread:

Sift the flour into a bowl, add the other ingredients and mix well by hand or in a food processor. Add a little water if the mixture is too dry, to form a soft dough. Roll out to about 5mm thick and cut into shapes.

Bake in a medium oven for about 10 minutes, until the biscuits have begun to colour. Allow to cool on the tray for a few minutes (they are very soft straight out of the oven), then place on a wire rack to cool completely.