

 *Sparkling Ginger Stars* 

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour  
1/2 teaspoon baking soda  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
2 teaspoons ground ginger  
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves  
1/4 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg  
1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened  
1/2 cup firmly packed dark brown sugar  
1/4 cup dark molasses  
1 egg yolk  
1 tablespoon grated lemon rind  
1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger  
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 large egg  
2 tablespoons whipping cream  
1 (3.25-oz.) jar coarse sparkling sugar

Combine first 7 ingredients in a medium bowl; stir until blended. Beat butter at medium speed with an electric mixer until creamy; gradually add brown sugar, beating well. Beat in molasses, egg yolk, lemon rind, grated ginger, and vanilla. Stir in flour mixture; beat just until blended. Shape dough into a ball, and divide in half. Flatten each half into a round disk; wrap each in plastic wrap, and chill 2 1/2 hours until firm. Line 2 large baking sheets with parchment paper. Roll out dough, 1 section at a time, to 1/4" thickness on a lightly floured surface. Cut into star shapes, using a 4" cookie cutter. Place 1/2" apart on prepared baking sheets.

Whisk together 1 egg and whipping cream; brush egg wash lightly over cookies. Sprinkle heavily with sparkling sugar. Bake at 325° for 17 minutes or until cookies are puffed and slightly darker around edges. Cool 2 minutes on baking sheets; remove with parchment paper to wire racks to cool completely.