

# Cleo Coyle's Pfeffernüsse

## German gingerbread snowball cookies

Text & photos (c) by Alice Alfonsi, who writes the [Coffeehouse Mysteries](#) as [Cleo Coyle](#) with her husband, Marc Cerasini

*If you love home-baked gingerbread cookies, but you hate rolling pins, this is the cookie for you! Like any recipe that's been around for hundreds of years, pfeffernüsse has countless variations. My version takes a kinder, gentler approach to the cookie, making it softer than the traditional version and keeping the spice aspect more sweetly balanced among ginger, nutmeg, cinnamon, and allspice (with just a pinch of pepper in these “peppernuts” to keep them lively). May you eat them with joy to the world!*

~ Cleo Coyle, author of  
[The Coffeehouse Mysteries](#)

**Yields:** 3 dozen cookies

### Ingredients

1-1/2 cups flour  
1/4 teaspoon baking soda  
1/8 teaspoon salt  
1/2 teaspoon allspice  
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon  
1/2 teaspoon nutmeg  
1/2 teaspoons ground ginger  
1 large pinch ground black pepper  
1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, softened  
1/4 cup granulated white sugar  
1/4 cup dark brown sugar, packed  
1 large egg  
2 Tablespoons molasses (not blackstrap!) or honey  
1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract  
1/2 cup powdered sugar



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**Step 1 – Mix the dough:** Preheat oven to **325° F**. Whisk together flour, baking soda, salt, and ground spices. Set aside. In a separate bowl, use an electric mixer to cream softened butter and sugars until light and fluffy. Add in egg, molasses (or honey), and vanilla. **Gradually** add in dry flour mixture, blending just until the dough comes together.

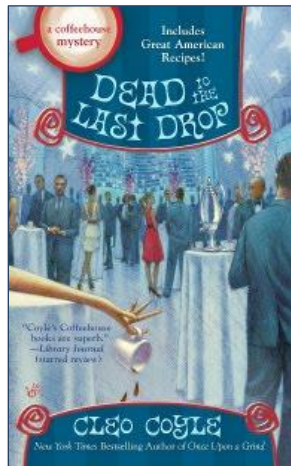
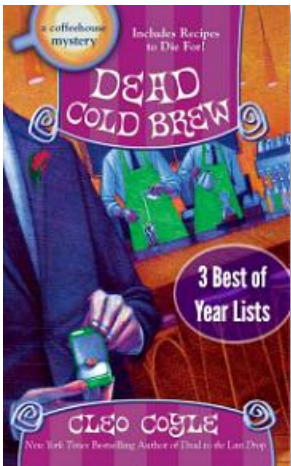
**Step 2 – Chill:** Pat dough into mound and chill for 30 minutes. (Dough will be sticky and chilling will make it easier to handle in the next step.) At this point, you can store the dough for up to 3 days in the fridge, but be sure to reap it tightly in plastic to prevent it from drying out.

**Step 3 – Bake the cookies:** When ready to bake, break off small pieces of dough and roll into small balls (3/4 inch in diameter). Bake in **325° F. preheated oven** for **about 13 minutes**. Do not burn bottoms. Insides will continue to cook as they cool.

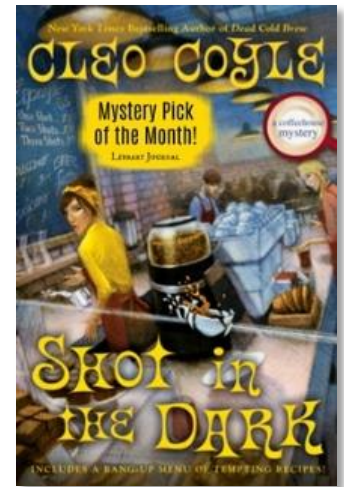
**Step 4 – Snow-dusting:** Allow cookies to cool on the cookie sheet. If you handle them while they're hot, they will lose their shape. Once they've cooled, roll them in powdered sugar.

**Storage tips:** Make sure your cookies are completely cool before storing in an airtight container. When cookies are stored warm, condensation can occur, turning them soggy.

*These are the perfect treat to leave for Santa on a snowy Christmas Eve. May you and your loved ones...  
Eat with joy to the world! ~ Cleo*



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