Piparkūkas

Piparkūkas, literally pepper cakes, are gingerbread cookies traditionally served at Christmas. I remember a formal family ritual; my mother would mix the dough and my grandmother would come, especially to taste it and comment. Did it need more sugar or spice? Was it the right texture? When it was judged to be correct, we would roll it out and I was allowed to cut out the shapes with various cookie cutters.

1/3 cup dark brown sugar  
1/3 cup salted butter  
1 cup corn syrup  
1 tbsp black strap molasses  
2 eggs  
3 1/2 cups flour  

1/2 tsp ginger  
1/2 tsp cinnamon  
1/2 tsp cardamom  
1/2 tsp nutmeg  
1/4 tsp cloves (ground)  
1 tsp grated lemon rind  
1 tsp baking powder


Bring to room temperature. On lightly floured surface, roll dough to 1/8 inch thickness. Cut out shapes with cookie cutter. Place on greased cookie sheet and bake in 400 degree oven for 7-8 minutes. Cool on wire racks. Makes about 5 dozen 2” cookies. The same dough was used to make gingerbread houses - even a gingerbread village!

Christine and Lia Christmas 1973