

## Molasses vs. Sorghum

Molasses and Sorghum - What is the difference? At Grandma's Pantry, customers often ask this question. Here is some information that might help to answer this question (along with a delicious recipe).

The sorghum plant, which is a type of grass, was introduced into the United States from Africa in the early part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Sorghum syrup is a natural sweetener made by processing the juice that is extracted from the sorghum plant. Special milling equipment extracts the juice from the crushed stalks, and evaporating pans with heating units steam off the excess water leaving syrup. Sorghum syrup is produced primarily in the United States and is used as a substitute for sugar. It tends to have a thinner consistency and a slightly more sour taste than does molasses. Sorghum contains vitamins and minerals and is a good source of phosphorus, magnesium, thiamin and omega 6 fatty acids.

Molasses was also introduced to the United States during the 17<sup>th</sup> century when traders started transporting it from the Caribbean to New England where much of it was made into rum. Molasses was the most popular sweetener until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century because it was more affordable than sugar. Molasses is the by-product of processing sugar cane into sugar. The sugar cane plant is stripped of its leaves and the juice is extracted from the cane by crushing or mashing. The juice is boiled to concentrate it, which produces crystallization of the sugar. The result of the first boiling and removal of the sugar crystals is called "first molasses" (mild) and is the sweetest tasting. "Second molasses" (dark) is created from a second boiling and removal of sugar crystals. "Blackstrap" is the result of a third boiling of the syrup. The darker molasses is considered bittersweet. Sulfured molasses is made from young sugar cane - sulfur dioxide is added as a preservative. Unsulfured molasses is made from mature sugar cane which does not require a preservative. Molasses contains significant amounts of vitamins and minerals and is a good source of calcium, magnesium, potassium and iron.

Sorghum and molasses may be stored on the shelf for up to 2 years. Once they are opened, they can be stored up to a year, if properly stored in the refrigerator to retard mold growth. If mold growth does appear, the syrups should be discarded. If the syrups crystallize, it does not cause any harm and the syrups can be liquefied by placing them in a larger container of hot water until melted.

Sorghum and molasses are old-fashioned sweeteners - many people have grown up using them. Molasses is the sweetener generally preferred for cooking and baking, while sorghum is popular as a syrup. Grandma's Pantry has a great supply of molasses and sorghum for your cooking and eating pleasure. We will be happy to supply your pantry with these wonderful products. Check us out at [www.GrandmasPantryVa.com](http://www.GrandmasPantryVa.com).

Here are two molasses recipes to get you started:

## MOLASSES CRINKLES

Cream together:

1 ½ cups shortening

1 cup brown sugar

1 cup white sugar

Add:

2 eggs

½ cup molasses

In a separate bowl sift together:

4 ½ cups flour (or a bit more)

½ tsp. salt

3 tsp. baking soda

1 tsp. cloves

2 tsp. cinnamon

2 tsp. ginger

Add to first mixture and blend well.

Chill overnight. Shape into balls and roll in granulated sugar. Bake 10-12 minutes at 350 degrees or until lightly browned. Do not over-bake.

## MOM'S GINGERBREAD

Cream:

1 cup margarine

1 cup brown sugar

Add:

2 eggs

1/2 cup molasses

Sift together in a separate bowl:

2 cups flour

½ tsp. baking powder

½ tsp. salt

½ tsp. cinnamon

½ tsp. ginger

Combine :

1 cup boiling water

2 tsp. baking soda

Add alternately with the dry ingredients. Pour into a greased 9X12 pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 30-35 minutes. Serve with lemon sauce or whipped topping.

***“So, whatever you eat or drink, or whatever you do,  
do all to the glory of God.”*** (I Cor. 10:31)