



Classic sugar cookies are the ideal canvas for your creativity. Cut them into Christmas shapes, rounds, or squares and frost them with your favorite royal icing and sprinkles. Or, if you don't think you are that artistic, simply cover them with a glaze. This cookie makes a wonderful pre-Christmas activity with your kids.

Classic Sugar Cookies

Ingredients

3 1/2 cups flour
1 cup butter, room temperature
2 eggs, room temperature
1 cup sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons vanilla extract

Instructions

Sift the flour and salt in a bowl and set aside. In a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat the butter with the sugar for 10 minutes. Allowing the butter to beat this long makes extra light cookies. Add the eggs, one at a time, followed by the vanilla extract. Once both eggs are added, beat for an additional 2 minutes.

Add the flour in three batches and do not allow the dough to overmix (you should still see some flour). For the last batch, mix it in by hand 3 to 4 times and then let the mixer bring together the dough for 2 to 3 rotations. Divide the dough into 2 discs and wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour.

When you are ready to start rolling out your cookies, preheat your oven to 350°F. Prepare your cookie sheet by lining it with parchment paper or a silicone mat. Lightly flour a surface as well as the top of the disc of cooled dough. Using a rolling pin, roll out the dough into a 1/4" thickness. Use any cookie cutter to cut the shapes desired. Roll up and flatten into a disc any remaining dough and cut it with the cookie cutters again.

Place on the prepared cookie sheet 1" apart and bake for 10 to 12 minutes depending on your oven and the thickness of the cookie. Your cookie should be golden brown around the edges and firm on the top. Allow your cookies to rest on the cookie sheet for 10 minutes before transferring to a cooling rack. Cool completely before decorating. Note: The number of cookies made will depend on the size and shape of the cutters used.

Icing Your Cookies

Icing your cookies is a full-day event (especially with little ones). Plan ahead and have all your toppings handy and all your icing coloured in prepared plastic pastry bags. Traditional royal icing is often used to decorate sugar cookies. You will need to prepare two consistencies - one for piping and decoration and one for flooding (filling the cookie). The amount of frosting you will need will depend on the number of cookies you make. I have included some classic recipes for cookie frostings below.

Royal Icing

Ingredients (with eggs)

4 cups confectioner's sugar
3 egg whites
1 package vanilla sugar
1 teaspoon lemon juice
Food coloring of choice

Ingredients (without eggs)

4 cups confectioner's sugar
3 tablespoons meringue powder
8 to 10 tablespoons water
1 package vanilla sugar
Food coloring of choice



For the egg version: In a stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment, beat the egg whites with the vanilla sugar on high speed until fluffy. Sift the confectioner's sugar to avoid lumps. Turn down the mixer speed to low and slowly add the sifted sugar. Once all the sugar has been incorporated, add the lemon juice and continue to beat for 10 minutes. Ensure to keep the icing covered as it dries and hardens quite quickly.

For the meringue version: In a stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment, mix together the confectioner's sugar, vanilla sugar, meringue powder, and 8 tablespoons of water. Beat for 2 minutes. Add additional water to achieve consistency for piping or filling.

Separate the icing into bowls and add the desired color(s). You will need a medium consistency for piping. To achieve the desired consistency, add a few drops of water at a time. For a filling consistency, add a few more drops of water until the icing is much thinner. If your icing has become too thin, you can add confectioner's sugar. For a medium consistency, you should be able to squeeze the bag and create a line or shape that holds its shape. For a filling (or flooding) consistency, it will drip like a glaze.

When you have prepared your icing, insert it into a plastic decorating bag. For the piping, insert a coupler along with your tip on the bag before filling it (for the flooding consistency, no tip is required). Insert your bag into a glass to make it easier to fill. Tie the end with an elastic or a knot.

When frosting, use your medium consistency to create a border. Fill the border with your filling consistency and use a flat toothpick to even out if necessary. Once the surface is covered, shake a bit to remove any air bubbles. Allow hardening before adding additional piping.

Glaze

Ingredients

2 1/4 cups confectioner's sugar
1 to 2 tablespoons milk
1 teaspoon lemon juice
Food coloring of choice



Mix together the sugar, milk, and lemon juice until smooth. The icing should drip consistently from a spoon. Add the desired food coloring. Dip the top of the cookie into the glaze or pour on top. Top with sprinkles or allow to harden and paint with food-safe markers. Note: you can also put the glaze in a piping bag for drizzling on the top of the cookie.