

Soft Cut-Out Sugar Cookies

By Maria Arnold

With crisp edges, thick centers, and room for lots of decorating icing, I know you'll love these soft sugar cookies as much as I do. The number of cookies this recipe yields depends on the size of the cookie cutter you use. If you'd like to make dozens of cookies for a large crowd, double the recipe. This recipe is also in my New York Times best-selling cookbook, *Sally's Baking 101*.

American

sugar cookies

royal icing

Christmas cookies



PREP	COOK	TOTAL	SERVINGS
40 min	12 min	52 min	24

Nutrition (per serving)

CALORIES	PROTEIN	CARBS	FAT
75 kcal	1 g	16 g	1 g
SUGAR	SODIUM		
7 g	35 mg		

Ingredients

- **2 and 1/4 cups (281g)** all-purpose flour (spooned & leveled), plus more as needed for rolling and work surface)
- **1/2 teaspoon** baking powder

- **1/4 teaspoon** salt
- **3/4 cup** (12 Tbsp; 170g) unsalted butter (softened to room temperature)
- **3/4 cup** (150g) granulated sugar
- **1** large egg (at room temperature)
- **2 teaspoons** pure vanilla extract
- **1/4 teaspoon** almond extract (optional, but makes the flavor outstanding)*)
- Royal Icing, Easy Glaze Icing, or Cookie Buttercream (royal icing is pictured)
- Assorted sprinkles

Instructions

1. In a medium bowl, whisk the flour, baking powder, and salt together. Set aside.
2. In a large bowl using a handheld or a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat the butter and sugar together on high speed until the mixture is light and creamy, about 3 minutes. Add the egg, vanilla, and almond extract (if using) and beat on high speed until combined, about 1 minute. Scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl and beat again as needed to combine. Add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients and mix on low speed until combined. The dough should be soft. If it seems too soft and sticky for rolling, beat in 1 more Tablespoon of flour.
3. Divide the dough in half. Place each portion on a piece of lightly floured parchment paper or a lightly floured silicone baking mat. With a lightly floured rolling pin, roll the dough to about 1/4-inch thickness. Use a bit more flour if the dough seems too sticky. The rolled-out dough can be any shape, as long as it is evenly 1/4 inch thick.
4. Lightly dust one of the rolled-out dough portions with flour. (This prevents sticking.) Place the second rolled-out dough portion, still on the parchment paper, on top of the first. Cover the dough tightly and refrigerate it for at least 2 hours and up to 2 days.
5. Preheat the oven to 350°F (177°C). Line large baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats.
6. Carefully remove the top piece of dough from the refrigerator. If it's sticking to the bottom, run your hand under it to help remove it. Using a cookie cutter, cut the dough into shapes. Gather the scraps, reroll, and continue cutting until all the dough is used. (Note: It doesn't seem like a lot of dough, but you get a lot of cookies from the dough scraps you reroll.) Repeat with the second piece of dough. Arrange the cookies 3 inches apart on the prepared baking sheets.
7. Bake for 11–12 minutes or until the edges of the cookies are very lightly browned and set. If your oven has hot spots, rotate the baking sheets halfway through bake time. Allow the cookies to cool on the baking sheet for 5 minutes, then transfer to a cooling rack to cool completely before decorating.
8. Decorate the cooled cookies with royal icing, easy cookie icing, or cookie decorating buttercream. Feel free to tint any of the icings with gel food coloring. See post above for recommended decorating tools. No need to cover the decorated cookies as you wait for the icing to set. If it's helpful, decorate the cookies directly on a baking sheet so you can place the entire baking sheet in the refrigerator to help speed up the icing setting.
9. Enjoy cookies right away or wait until the icing sets to serve them. Once the icing has set, these cookies are great for gifting or shipping. Store plain or iced cookies covered tightly at room temperature for up to 5 days. For

longer storage, cover and refrigerate for up to 10 days. If decorated with cookie buttercream, cover and store decorated cookies at room temperature for up to 1 day, or in the refrigerator for up to 5 days.