

Decorating Cookies with Royal Icing

Objective: Children will create a flower design on cookies using the flow-in and dragging techniques

Recommended Ages: 9 years old and up

Time required for project: 1 hour

Overview

This project is designed to introduce children to cookie decorating. They will use decorating tools and royal icing to decorate cookies. The project leader will walk them through each step, demonstrate the basic techniques and assist them as they practice and decorate their cookies. Leaders should determine ahead of time how many adult helpers are needed. Depending on the age of the group, 1 adult for every 8 - 10 children should be enough.



Supplies

Wilton Items needed:

- ✓ *I Taught Myself to Decorate Cookies Kit*
 - If not purchasing kit, the following items will be needed:
 - Tip 3, 2 per child
 - Wilton Disposable Decorating Bags – 4 bags per child (box of bags can be shared by group)
- ✓ Wilton Icing Gel Colors – 3-5 colors of choice (to be shared by group)

Additional Kitchen Supplies (either leader can provide, or children can bring their own):

- ✓ Parchment or waxed paper, approximately 8 in. x 10 in. sheet per child
- ✓ Spatulas or butter knives, 1 per child
- ✓ Containers for mixing icing colors and thinning icing, 3 per child (can use bowls, disposable cups, whipped topping containers, etc.)
- ✓ Water
- ✓ Cup (to use as a bag holder)
- ✓ Corsage pin (only if not using *I Taught Myself to Decorate Cookies Kit*)
- ✓ Rubber bands (to use as bag ties)
- ✓ Container to transport decorated cookies home (without stacking cookies)
- ✓ 1 one-gallon plastic storage bag per child to transport dirty tools home
- ✓ Scissors
- ✓ Paper towels
- ✓ Toothpicks
- ✓ 1/4 teaspoon measuring spoon
- ✓ 2 ½ - 3" flat cookies, 4-6 per child (if *I Taught Myself Kit* it is purchased, use cutters included in kit) (recipe on pg. 8)
- ✓ Royal Icing, NOT thinned, approximately 1 ¼ cups per student (recipe on pg. 9)

Project Outline

1. Introduction
2. Prepare Royal Icing
 - a. Working with Royal Icing
 - b. Coloring Icing
 - c. Icing Consistency
 - d. Thinning the Icing
2. Decorating Bag Basics
 - a. Preparing the Bag
 - b. Filling the Bag
 - c. Closing the Bag
 - d. Holding the Bag
3. Techniques and Decorating Cookies
 - a. Lines/Outline
 - b. Flow-in (flooding)
 - c. Dragging
4. Clean-up/Wrap-up

INTRODUCTION - Provide quick overview of project

PREPARE THE ICING

***Leader should make icing in advance using recipe on page 8, enough for each child to have 1 ¼ cups**

Working with Royal Icing – Explain the basics of working with royal icing

- Royal icing colors well and provides a polished bakery-look that dries hard and opaque.
- Key ingredient in royal icing is meringue powder, which is essential to help royal icing dry hard, and is safer to use than egg whites because it is pasteurized.
 - Decorated cookies should dry for up to 24 hours. Even if they look dry, make sure they are before stacking and storing them.
- Use grease-free bowls and spoons when making icing, as oil will break down the icing
- Keep icing bowl covered while working because royal icing dries out very quickly when exposed to air.
- Icing can be stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks. Re-beat before using.

Coloring Icing -Explain the difference between liquid food coloring and Gel Icing Colors, then demonstrate how to color icing

- Liquid food coloring found in the baking aisle at the grocery store can be used but has limitations:
 - Color options are usually limited to just 4 base colors, limiting the color combinations you can create
 - Because food coloring is liquid, it can affect the consistency of your icing, especially when you need to add a lot to create an intense color.
- Gel Icing Colors



- Because Icing Colors are a gel form and the colors are concentrated, they do not change the consistency
- Available in 25 colors
- To use:
 - Dip a toothpick into the Icing Color jar, then swirl it in the icing
 - Stir the icing with a spatula to blend in the color
 - Add a little at a time, until you achieve the shade you want, using a fresh toothpick each time you add more color
- Colors will intensify as they sit

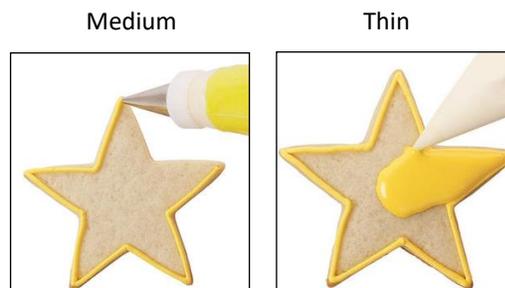


*Assist students with coloring icing

- Reserve enough white icing for each child to have approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ cup that will NOT be colored
- Have children work in pairs to save time with mixing colors, each partner picking a different color to mix
- Have each child mix approximately a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of royal icing in the color of their choice
- Remind students to keep icing covered with damp paper towel when not working with it

Icing Consistency – Explain how the 2 consistencies will be used

- This is the thickness of your icing. You will need to adjust the consistency of your icing depending on the decorations you will be making.
- For this project, you will be using medium consistency to outline and a thin consistency to flow-in.



Thinning the Icing - Demonstrate how to divide icing and thin it down for flow-in

- Add $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon water per $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of royal icing, adding a few drops at a time until you reach the proper consistency.
- To test consistency, take some icing on a spatula and drop it back down into the bowl. If it sinks after a full count of 10, then the thin consistency is set. Tap the bowl on the table several times to force any air bubbles up, then gently stir the surface to release the air.

*Assist children with thinning their icing to a flow-in consistency

- Each child should thin approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of white icing
- Each child should thin the entire amount of the colored icing they mixed

DECORATING BAG BASICS

Preparing the Bag – Demonstrate how to prepare a bag

- With scissors, cut about 1/2 in.- 3/4 in. off the tip of the bag
- Trimming too much of the bag can cause the tip to pop out of the bag when in use so start with cutting less rather than more
- Drop decorating tip inside bag, pushing it in as far as it will go
- Make sure tip fits firmly in the bag, so the icing doesn't leak from around the tip



*Assist children with preparing 2 bags using tip 3

Filling the Bag – Demonstrate how to fill a bag

- Most important point in filling the bag is to NOT overfill it. A bag that is too full will be hard to control when piping and will make your hand tire faster.
- Hold bag in one hand and fold down the top of the bag to form a generous cuff over your hand
- Using a spatula and a tip 3 bag, fill with approximately 1/4 cup of medium consistency icing
- To remove icing from spatula, squeeze bag with spatula between fingers and pull the spatula out, using the bag and your fingers to squeeze the icing off
- Thinned icing may be easier to pour into the bag, rather than using spatula, especially when using larger amounts of icing
 - When filling the other tip 3 bag with thinned icing, cover the tip end with a damp paper towel, then place bag in cup to help plug the tip hole. This will help prevent the thin icing from running through the tip while bag is being held upright.
 - Do not cut the ends off the bags without tips until it is time to decorate cookies. This will prevent the bags from leaking and the icing from drying out.



Closing the Bag – Demonstrate how to close and secure the bag with a rubber band

- Unfold cuff, force the icing down into the bag, and twist the top of the bag closed
- For the medium consistency white icing bag, release any air trapped in the bag by continuing to squeeze the bag until some of the icing comes out of the tip and into a bowl. This is called “burping” the bag.

- Use a decorating bag tie or rubber band to secure the bag closed so no icing squeezes out of the top of the bag. This tip is especially helpful for new decorators and children, and when working with flow-in icing.



Holding the Bag – Demonstrate how to hold the bag

- Place the bag in the palm of your hand with the twist between your thumb and forefinger
- Curl your fingers around the bag so you can apply even pressure with your entire hand
- Fatigue in any one finger may signal a problem in your grip.
- As you decorate, periodically twist the bag and slide the rubber band or bag tie down, to force the remaining icing down into the bottom of the bag and tip
- Use the fingers of your other hand to steady the bag and guide the tip as you decorate
- Squeeze the decorating bag as you guide it



***Have each child fill 4 bags with approximately ¼ cup icing and immediately rubber band the tops:**

- 1 bag with tip 3 – medium consistency, white
- 1 bag with no tip – thin consistency, white
- 1 bag with tip 3 for flower petals - thin consistency, color #1
- 1 bag with no tip for flower centers - thin consistency, color #2

Hint: To minimize mess, have each child work with partner to assist with filling thinned icing bags. One child can hold the cup with the opened bag while the other child pours icing into the bag.

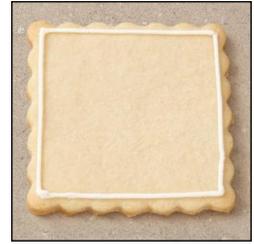
DECORATE COOKIES - Demonstrate outline, flow-in and dragging technique to complete cookie design. Then children can work at their own pace to decorate their cookies.

Line/Outline

Outlines are key in cookie decorating because they form the “dam” that keeps the icing on the cookie.

- With tip 3 and medium consistency white icing bag, outline cookie
 - Hold decorating bag at a 45° angle with back of bag tilted to the right (or to the left for left-handed decorators)

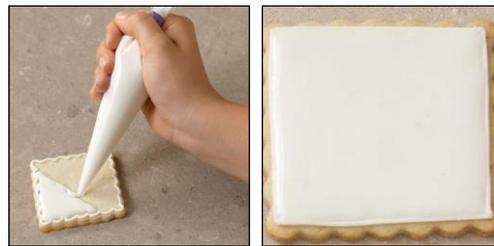
- Touch tip to surface and squeeze so that icing attaches to the surface
- Continue squeezing with even pressure and raise tip slightly above surface, guiding icing into desired shape. Wherever the shape comes to a point or changes direction, touch the tip to the surface to achieve a more defined point before continuing to outline with tip raised slightly.
- To end outline, stop squeezing the bag and touch the tip to the surface before pulling tip away



Flow-in/Flooding

This technique is a simple way to decorate cookies with a smooth finish and offers numerous options for design and adding color.

- Immediately flow-in remainder of cookie with thinned white icing bag, allowing the thinned icing to flow into the outline
 - Cut a small opening at the tip of the thinned white icing bag (about 1/8 in.)
 - Using the outline that was just piped with medium consistency icing, fill the area inside the cookie with thinned icing, allowing the icing to flow into the outline. Use a small back and forth motion, keeping tip in fresh icing so it will flow back into itself.



Dragging

- Using thinned colored icing bag, immediately pipe clusters of 5 dots into wet icing
- Working quickly, use etching tool (or corsage pin) to pull through each dot from outside of the cluster to the center to form the flower petals. The dots should look like elongated hearts.
- Using thinned icing in contrasting color, pipe one large dot or pipe 5 tiny dots for flower center
 - The amount of pressure applied to the bag will determine the dot size.
 - Use less pressure for a tiny dot, more pressure for a larger dot



CLEAN-UP AND WRAP-UP

INSPIRATION



ROLL-OUT COOKIE DOUGH
(Make about 3 dozen cookies)

Ingredients

2 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, softened
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups granulated sugar
1 egg
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons Wilton Pure Vanilla Extract
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon Wilton Imitation Almond Extract

Directions

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Mix flour, baking powder and salt in medium bowl. Beat butter and sugar with an electric mixer in a large bowl until light and fluffy. Beat in eggs and extracts. Add flour mixture to butter mixture, one cup at a time, mixing after each addition.

Flour your surface. Divide dough into 2 balls; roll each into a circle 12 in. x $\frac{1}{8}$ in. thick. Cut the cookies. Place on ungreased baking sheet. Bake cookies 8-11 minutes or until lightly browned.

WILTON ROYAL ICING RECIPE

(Recipe yields 3 cups of stiff consistency icing)

Ingredients

3 tablespoons Wilton Meringue Powder
4 cups sifted confectioners' sugar (approximately 1 lb.)
6-7 tablespoons water

Directions

Beat all ingredients in large bowl with electric mixer until icing forms peaks and loses its sheen; 7-10 minutes for a stand mixer; 10-12 minutes for a hand mixer.

To thin for flow-in

Add ½ teaspoon water per cup of royal icing, adding a few drops at a time until you reach the proper consistency. To test consistency, drop a dollop of thinned royal icing back into the bowl. If it sinks at a full count of 10, you're good to go!

Helpful Hints

- If you feel your icing is too thin, add a little more confectioners' sugar; if you feel your icing is too thick, add a little more water.
- Decorated cookies should dry for up to 24 hours. Even if they look dry, make sure they are before you stack and store them.
- Store icing in an airtight container at room temperature up to 2 weeks. Re-beat before using.