

One Cookie: Six Ways

A versatile recipe for holiday sweet treats.

Basic Dough:

Prep Time: 45 minutes to 1-1/2 hours

Bake: 20 to 30 minutes per batch



What you'll need

- * 4 cups all-purpose flour
- * 1 tablespoon baking powder
- * 1 teaspoon salt
- * 2 cups sugar
- * 1 cup butter (2 sticks), softened
- * 2 large eggs
- * 2 tablespoons milk
- * 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Instructions

1. In medium bowl, combine flour, baking powder and salt. In large bowl, with mixer at low speed, beat sugar with butter until blended. Increase speed to high; beat sugar until light and creamy. At low speed, beat in eggs, milk and vanilla, then gradually beat in flour mixture just until blended. Wrap dough in plastic wrap and refrigerate 1 hour or until easy to handle.

2. Preheat oven to 325°F. Roll or shape dough according to choice of variation below. Place cookies on an ungreased cookie sheet. Bake 20 to 30 minutes, until golden, depending on thickness. Transfer to wire rack to cool.

Sugared Spirals

Roll dough into 2-tablespoon balls. Place on cookie sheets and flatten. Bake and cool. Paint cookies with white or colored icing. Let dry completely. With pastry bag, pipe on a spiral in a contrasting color. While icing is still wet, dip the spiral in a shallow bowl of sugar. Makes 18 cookies.

Two-Tone Weave

Mix 6 drops green food coloring into one-quarter of the dough. Beat 2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa and 1 egg yolk into another quarter. Refrigerate with remaining plain dough. Roll each to 1/4-inch thick. Cut into 1/4"x2" strips. Weave plain and colored strips together. Bake and cool. Makes 80 cookies.

Squiggles, Squares, Dots

Roll dough to 1/4-inch thick. Cut squares, ovals and rounds with cookie cutters. Bake and cool. Paint cookies with white or colored icing and, while icing is still wet, pipe on a contrasting color using a pastry bag. Makes 30 cookies.

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Half Dipped

Roll dough to 1/8-inch thick. Cut into shapes with sharp knife or cutters. Bake and cool. Melt 1 cup chocolate chips. Dip half of each cookie in chocolate, then immediately in chopped walnuts, if you like. Let dry on wax paper. Makes 52 cookies.

Coconut Snowballs

Roll dough into 1-tablespoon balls. Bake and cool. With a fork, toss 3 cups coconut with 1 drop blue or green food coloring or a tiny dot of violet paste food coloring. Dip top of each cookie in icing; roll in coconut. Let dry. Makes 36 cookies.

Striped Chocolate Sandwich

Roll dough to 1/8-inch thick. Cut with cookie cutters. Bake and cool. Melt 1-1/2 cups chocolate chips. Dip one side of a cookie in chocolate and top with another cookie. With fork, drizzle chocolate and icing on top. Let dry. Makes 26 cookies.

Pastel Icings

Beat 2-1/2 cups confectioners' sugar, 2 tablespoons powdered egg white and 8 tablespoons water at high speed until smooth. Divide icing mixture equally into 4 bowls, coloring one with 2 drops green food coloring, one with 2 drops blue and one with 4 drops red and 3 drops blue to make lavender. Leave one white. To pipe, use a pastry bag and tip, or place each icing in a nonpleated plastic bag, snip a tiny hole in the corner and use as a pastry bag.