Best Sugar Cookies and Smooth Icing

**Ingredients:**

**COOKIES**

3/4 cup (170g) unsalted butter, slightly softened to room temperature

3/4 cup (150g) granulated sugar

1 large egg, at room temperature

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

1/4 teaspoon almond extract (makes the flavor outstanding)

2 and 1/4 cups (281g) all-purpose flour (measured correctly)

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

Directions:

Day1

In a large bowl using a handheld or stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the butter until creamed and smooth - about 1 minute. Add the sugar and beat on high speed until light and fluffy, about 3 or 4 minutes. Scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl as needed. Add the egg, vanilla, and almond extract and beat on high until fully combine, about 2 minutes. Scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl as needed.

Whisk the flour and baking powder together in a medium bowl. Turn the mixer down to low and add about half of the flour mixture, beating until just barely combined. Add the rest of the flour and continue mixing until just combined. If the dough still seems too soft, you can add 1 Tablespoon more flour until it is a better consistency for rolling.

Divide the dough into 2 equal parts. Roll each portion out onto a piece of parchment to about 1/4″ thickness. Stack the pieces (with paper) onto a baking sheet and refrigerate for at least 1 hour and up to 1 day. Chilling is mandatory. If chilling for more than a couple hours, cover the top dough piece with a single piece of parchment paper. Chill up to 2 days (max).

**Day 2**

Once chilled, preheat oven to 350°F (177°C). Line 2-3 large baking sheets with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat. The amount of batches will depend on how large/small you cut your cookies. Remove one of the dough pieces from the refrigerator and using a cookie cutter, cut in shapes. Transfer the cut cookie dough to the prepared baking sheet. Re-roll the remaining dough and continue cutting until all is used.

Before baking, you can apply sprinkles like I did on the rainbow sprinkle lined cookies shown in this post. If you’re planning to only ice them instead, or you just want to keep them plain - skip the sprinkles.

Bake for 8-11 minutes, until very lightly colored on top and around the edges. Make sure you rotate the baking sheet halfway through bake time. My cookies took 9 minutes. Allow to cool on baking sheet for 5 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely before icing. I always let mine cool overnight, just to be sure.

Make the icing and decorate the cooled cookies however you'd like. I doubled the frosting recipe to frost a majority of my cookies. I used a paint brush for some and double-dipped others directly into it. I did not color the icing, as you can see. Add sprinkles on top of the icing if preferred. Once the icing has set, these cookies are great for gifts, sending, or munching on right away. I find they stay soft for about 5 days at room temperature.

Make ahead tip: Unfrosted cookies freeze well up to 3 months. Thaw overnight in the refrigerator. Frosted cookies do not freeze well at all. You can chill the cookie dough for up to 2 days (step 3). You can also freeze the cookie dough before rolling for up to 3 months. Then allow to thaw overnight in the refrigerator. Then allow to come to room temperature for about 1 hour. Then roll and continue with the recipe as directed.

Additional Notes:

Room temperature egg is preferred to be easily dispersed in the cookie dough. Good rule of thumb: always use room temperature egg if recipe calls for butter at room temperature or melted.

FOR DECORATING

Sugar Cookie Icing

1 cup powdered sugar sifted

2 to 3 tablespoons of water

½ vanilla

Assorted sprinkles

Mix together the powdered sugar, vanilla and 2 1/2 tablespoons of milk or water for the flood icing using a fork or a spoon. This icing should still be fairly thick, but it should drizzle easily and a bit of drizzled icing should sink immediately back into the icing. If desired add food coloring to the flood icing now.