

# Valentine's Day Sugar Cookies

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Looking for a great Valentine's Day Sugar Cookie recipe? These classic sugar cookies are decorated with royal icing in a number of beautiful Valentine's Day designs. They make wonderful edible gifts!

A few notes on the royal icing: For the best results, the royal icing on the cookies needs to dry overnight before you package or store them, so be sure to factor this drying time into your cookie preparation. This recipe will probably produce too much royal icing for the cookies, but I greatly prefer to have a little extra icing versus not enough! If you find yourself with leftover icing, you can store it in the refrigerator in airtight container for up to a week, or freeze for 2-3 months. The icing will separate if left for more than a few hours, so when this happens, you can re-mix it to restore it to its original texture.



 **SERVINGS:** 24 large cookies



PREP TIME

2 hrs

COOK TIME

12 mins

TOTAL TIME

2 hrs 12 mins

## INGREDIENTS

### FOR THE SUGAR COOKIES:

- 20.25 oz all-purpose flour, (4.5 cups)
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 12.25 oz granulated sugar, (1.75 cups)
- 8 oz unsalted butter, (1 cup) at room temperature
- 2 large eggs, at room temperature
- 1 tsp vanilla extract, (can substitute lemon or almond extract)
- 2 TBSP buttermilk

### FOR THE ROYAL ICING:

- 6 TBSP meringue powder
- 3/4 cup water
- 1.5 lbs powdered sugar, (6 cups)
- 1.5 tsp light corn syrup



- 1/2 tsp almond extract, (can substitute lemon or clear vanilla extract)
- Gel food coloring, I use Americolor brand

## TOOLS:

- Heart-shaped cookie cutter, about 3-3.5 inches wide
- Piping tips, #2 round tip, small star tip, leaf tip
- Piping bags and couplers

## INSTRUCTIONS

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### TO MAKE THE SUGAR COOKIES:

1. In a bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, and salt, and set aside for now.
2. In the bowl of a large stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, combine the butter and sugar, and mix everything together on medium speed until fluffy and well-mixed, about 1-2 minutes.
3. Add the eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition, then add the vanilla extract and buttermilk. With the mixer running on low, add the dry ingredients, and mix until they're just about incorporated. Stop the mixer when only a few streaks of flour remain. Scrape the bottom and sides of the bowl with a spatula, and finish mixing all the dough by hand.
4. Divide the dough in half and press each into a thin disc, wrapping well with plastic wrap. Refrigerate until firmer but not hard, about 30 minutes.
5. When you're ready to bake the cookies, preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Place a disc of dough between two sheets of parchment or waxed paper, and roll out until it is 1/4-inch thick. Use a 3-inch heart cookie cutter to cut out your cookies and place them on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Combine the scraps and re-roll the dough to cut more cookies. You should get about 24 large heart cookies. Put the sheet in the freezer for 10 minutes before baking to help the cookies hold their shape.
6. Bake the trays of cookies for 10-12 minutes, until the edges are just starting to take on color and they have lost the raw shine in the middle. Let the cool on the baking sheet for 5 minutes, then remove them to wire racks to cool completely before decorating them.

### TO MAKE THE ROYAL ICING:

1. Combine the meringue powder and water in the bowl of a large stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment. Mix them together on medium-low speed until frothy. Add the powdered sugar, corn syrup, and flavoring extract, and mix on low until the powdered sugar is moistened.
2. Turn the mixer speed back to medium-low and mix for 5 minutes, until the royal icing is shiny, stiff, and voluminous. Do not mix on high speed, and do not mix for more than 5 minutes, or you may incorporate too many air bubbles and change the texture of your royal icing.
3. Separate out half of the icing to leave plain white, and press a piece of cling wrap on top so that it doesn't form a crust.

4. Decide how many icing colors you want, and divide the remaining icing into that many bowls. Add a few drops of gel food coloring to each bowl of icing and stir by hand until the color is evenly distributed. Be aware that royal icing tends to darken a bit as it dries, so if you want pretty pastel colors, keep that in mind and don't add too much coloring.
5. The frosting consistency right out of the mixer is fairly stiff, but for most of the designs, we'll want a thinner consistency. The only thing that will require a thicker consistency is piping stiff rosettes onto decorated cookies. If you want to make this design, separate out a portion of stiff frosting in the color(s) of your choice, and store it in an airtight container for now. For all of the other designs, we'll thin the frosting colors out by adding a spoonful of water at a time, and stirring slowly until it's incorporated. You have the right consistency when you lift up a spoonful of icing, let it drip back into the bowl, and it takes about 15 seconds for the trail of icing to fully disappear in the bowl. Add water a little bit at a time to each color until you achieve this consistency.
6. Place each color in a piping bag fitted with a small round tip (I recommend a #2 tip).

## TO DECORATE THE COOKIES:

1. Most of the designs require piping colors onto wet frosting. I recommend working in small batches and flooding 2-3 cookies at a time with white frosting, then piping the designs on, then doing another small batch, to avoid having the royal icing dry out before the cookies are fully decorated.
2. To flood the cookies, fit a piping bag with a small round tip (I recommend a #2 tip) and fill it with white frosting. Draw a thin outline with the royal icing around the outside of a few cookies. Next fill the center of the cookie with royal icing. If you miss any spots, use the tip of the piping bag to nudge the icing into place, or use a toothpick to smooth out any rough lines. This is your blank canvas for making all the Valentine's Day designs! Make sure to work quickly to decorate the cookies after they have been flooded.
3. To make heart outline cookies: pipe dots of color along the outer edge of the cookie, spacing them about 1/2-inch apart. The dots should sink into the wet white icing fairly quickly. Take a toothpick and, starting at the top center of the heart, drag it through the line of colored dots. The dragging motion will create an elongated heart shape in each dot. You can also pipe randomly placed dots all over the cookie, and drag a toothpick through the dots individually to make hearts.
4. To make zigzag cookies: pipe lines of alternating colors horizontally across the white icing. Take a toothpick and drag it through the lines vertically. Once at the bottom of the cookie, move the toothpick over a little bit (perhaps 1/8") and drag it upwards, creating a zig-zag in the opposite direction. Continue this pattern until you've created lines across the whole cookie.
5. To make elegant rose cookies: these look best when made with two different shades of the same color, like pale pink and dark pink. Start with the pale pink and pipe several blobs on top of the cookie—refer to the picture tutorial to get a general idea of the shape. Take the darker pink color

and pipe a line across the center of the blob. Finally, add a dot of white in the center. Now for the fun part! Take a toothpick and start swirling the colors together. It should only take a few swirls before they start to look like abstract roses. Add a few dots of green around the edges, and pull the dots of green out with a toothpick so they look like leaves.

6. To pipe stiff rosettes on cookies: the rosettes can be piped onto plain white cookies, or cookies that have been decorated with dots, stripes, or whatever else you like. Let the base cookies sit and dry for about an hour before adding the rosettes on top. Place stiff consistency frosting in a piping bag fitted with a small star tip. Start in the center and pipe a small swirl outward in a rosette shape. You can do just 1 flower or several bunched together. Decorate the edges with small leaves piped with stiff green frosting, if desired.
7. The decorated cookies can be enjoyed the same day they are made, but the royal icing will probably take 8-12 hours to fully dry, so if you want to stack and store them, let them sit at room temperature overnight to dry and harden before packaging them.

## RECIPE NOTES

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The Elegant Rose cookie is adapted from a design on SweetAmbs.com. This website is a great resource for all things sugar cookie and royal icing, and has many beautiful sugar cookie tutorials!



## MEASURING TIPS

Our recipes are developed using weight measurements, and we highly recommend using a kitchen scale for baking whenever possible. However, if you prefer to use cups, volume measurements are provided as well. PLEASE NOTE: the adage "8 oz = 1 cup" is NOT true when speaking about weight, so don't be concerned if the measurements don't fit this formula.

*recipe found on:* <https://www.sugarhero.com/valentines-day-sugar-cookies/>

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