



Sparkle Sweetheart Cookies

Makes: 40 cookies

Prep Time: 1 hour Bake Time: 12 minutes per sheet

Total Time: 1 hour & 36 minutes

Ingredients

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 & 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 cup unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
- 2 ounces block cream cheese, softened to room temperature
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 large egg, at room temperature
- 2 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp almond extract
- 3/4 cup sanding sugar, pink and red or assorted colors
- 40 chocolate hearts, unwrapped (see Chef's Note)

Instructions

Whisk the flour, baking powder, and salt together until combined. Set aside.

In a large bowl using a hand-held or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat the butter and cream cheese together on high speed until relatively smooth, about 2 minutes. Add the granulated sugar and beat until combined and creamy. Add the egg, vanilla extract, and almond extract and beat on high speed until combined, about 1 minute. Scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl as needed to combine.

Add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients and mix on low speed until combined. The dough will be thick. Cover dough tightly with aluminum foil or plastic wrap and chill for at least 30-60 minutes and up to 3-4 days. If chilling for longer than 2-3 hours, allow the dough to sit at room temperature for at least 30 minutes before rolling and baking because the dough will be quite hard and the cookies may not spread.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Line two large baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats. Set aside.

Pour sanding sugar in a bowl or, if using multiple colors, a few separate bowls.

Roll balls of cookie dough, about 1 tablespoon of dough per cookie, then roll each ball in the sanding sugar to coat. Place each dough ball 2 inches apart on the baking sheets. Using the back of a measuring cup or drinking glass, gently press down on each dough ball to slightly flatten. Bake the cookies for 12-13 minutes or until very lightly browned on the edges.

Remove from the oven and allow to cool on the baking sheets for 5 minutes. Press a chocolate heart into each cookie and quickly stick the baking sheet in the freezer or fridge so the warm cookie does not completely melt the chocolate heart. Let the chocolate set (about 15 minutes) on the cookies in the freezer/refrigerator.

Cookies will stay fresh covered at room temperature for 1 week.

Chef's Notes:

Make Ahead Instructions: You can make the cookie dough and chill it in the refrigerator for up to 3-4 days. Baked cookies freeze well for up to 3 months. Thaw overnight in the refrigerator and bring to room temperature, if desired, before serving. Unbaked cookie dough balls (without sanding sugar coating) will freeze well for up to 3 months. Let sit at room temperature for 30 minutes, pre-heat the oven, then roll in sanding sugar. Bake as directed. Read my tips and tricks on how to freeze cookie dough.

Chocolate hearts are a seasonal item around Valentine's Day. I like Hershey's or Dove brands. A standard bag has about 35 hearts in it (Dove brand). Don't bother getting a second bag of them, if you don't want. The cookies are delicious without the chocolate as well!

Recipe by Sally's Baking Addiction