



Holiday Shortbread Cookies

Makes: 45 cookies

Prep Time: 45 minutes Bake Time: 45 minutes

Total Time: 1 hour & 30 minutes plus chill time 2 hours

Ingredients

Shortbread Cookies:

- 3 sticks (1 & 1/2 cups) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 1 cup powdered sugar, sifted
- 1 tsp vanilla bean paste (extract will work too but I prefer paste)
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 3 & 3/4 cups all-purpose flour

Vanilla Bean American Buttercream:

- 2 sticks (1 cup) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 1 tsp vanilla bean paste
- pinch of salt
- 4 cups powdered sugar, sifted
- 2-3 tbsp heavy cream, as needed
- Blue gel food coloring

Instructions

Shortbread Cookies:

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream together the butter and powdered sugar on medium-high speed until light and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Add in the vanilla bean paste and mix to combine. Add the salt and flour, and mix on low until just incorporated. The dough will be very soft.

Turn the dough out onto a piece of plastic wrap and shape into a rectangle. Wrap tightly in the plastic wrap and then place in the fridge for at least 2-3 hours to firm up.

Remove the dough from the fridge and allow it to sit on the bench for 10 minutes to soften slightly. Divide into two, and tightly wrap the piece that you are not working with.

Preheat the oven to 325°F. Line 2-3 baking sheets with parchment paper.

Place the first piece of dough between two pieces of parchment paper, and bang gently to help flatten out, then roll out to about 1/4-inch thick. Place the dough, still between the parchment paper, onto a sheet pan and freeze for 10-15 minutes (this helps chill the dough which means you will get a super clean cut when you are cutting out the cookies). Repeat the rolling out process with the second portion of dough. You can stack them up in the freezer if you like.

Remove the dough from the freezer and peel off the top piece of parchment paper. Using a 2" circle cutter, cut circles of the dough out and place on the sheet pan, spacing evenly between (I can do 20 on a pan, 4 rows of 5 cookies). Press any scraps back together and re-roll, then freeze and repeat the cutting out process.

Transfer the tray of cut out cookies to the freezer for 10 minutes, then bake for 17-18 minutes, until the shortbread has set and is just beginning to turn golden. Allow to cool on the pans for 15 minutes before transferring to a wire rack and allowing to cool completely.

Repeat the cutting out and chilling process with the remainder of the cookies.

Vanilla Bean American Buttercream:

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, whip the butter, vanilla bean paste and salt until pale and creamy. Sift in the powdered sugar, and mix on medium speed until well combined. If needed, add cream a tablespoon at a time, until the frosting is light and fluffy, and a pipeable consistency.

Add gel food coloring until the desired color is reached. Transfer some of the buttercream to a bag fitted with an open star tip (I used the Wilton 1M).

Assembly:

Pipe rosettes onto some of the cookies (or all of them if you like), and spread the remainder of the cookies with buttercream using an offset spatula, and finish with sprinkles of your choice.

Allow the cookies to sit at room temperature to let the buttercream crust over, and then store in an airtight container at room temperature.