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Delicious Holiday Decorating

By Susie Iventosch



Shortbread snowflake edible ornaments Photo Susie Iventosch

in the frosting! Have fun and don't snitch too much of the dough along the way. It is delicious even before it is baked!

Cinnamon Shortbread Snowflake Cookie Ornaments

By Susie Iventosch

(Makes approximately 2-3 dozen cookies, depending upon the size of your cookie cutters
Cookies

INGREDIENTS

1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter at room temperature
3/4 cup powdered sugar
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour

Decoration Materials

1 recipe Royal Frosting (below)
1 jar of white shimmery decorative sugar
Silver and white shimmer dust, or edible glitter
Ribbons (1/2 to 5/8 inch wide and roughly 20 to 24 inches long) for hanging cookies for decorations

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

In a large mixing bowl, beat butter with powdered sugar until creamy. Add cinnamon and vanilla and mix well. Finally, blend in flour. Form dough into a ball and wrap with plastic wrap. Refrigerate for about 20 minutes, or until fairly firm.

Roll dough out onto a floured cloth or board, to a thickness of approximately 1/4 inch. Cut out with snowflake-shaped cookie cutters and place onto baking sheet, about 1 inch apart.

Make a hole about 1/2 inch from the top of each cookie, before baking, using a regular plastic straw.

At the request to feature edible holiday ornaments, I was a little hesitant. Even though they can be charming and cute, they are usually not all that palatable. And, I must say, my first experiment for this holiday column was a complete disaster! It was a cinnamon spice cookie of sorts, made strictly from applesauce, cinnamon, allspice and nutmeg. While it smelled divine, it did not taste good at all, and when I hung the snowflakes from a ribbon in the window, the hole ripped apart and the snowflakes fell to the floor!

The second attempt was exceedingly better. I decided upon a real shortbread cookie, made with cinnamon and decorated with Royal Frosting and sparkling sugars. They turned out to be so beautiful and the only tough decision was whether to hang them as decorations or eat them right away!

We did a little bit of both.

I think you will have fun making these cookies. You can be as artistic as you want with the frosting decorations and you can even use food coloring to make different colors, if you like. I just stayed with the white, since these are snowflakes. But, if you decide to make Christmas trees, Santas, or snowmen, you can definitely use different colors

Bake for 20-25 minutes, or until slightly browned on edges. If the holes have closed up slightly, just use the same straw and carefully reform hole while cookie is still hot and soft.

Cool completely. Thread ribbons through holes of each cookie and tie a knot in the top. Decorate with Royal Icing (recipe below) and immediately sprinkle each cookie with edible glitter and sugars, before icing hardens. Allow to sit for half an hour or until icing is firm, before hanging decorations.

Royal Icing

I had never made this frosting before for decorating cookies, but I will definitely use it again! Not only is it delicious, but easy to make using meringue powder in place of egg whites, and dreamy for decorating the cookies. It is so easy to use in the decorating bag, and it hardens up well, so that the decorations don't run off the cookies! Although I did not try it, I believe you could easily add a little vanilla extract in place of some of the water.

INGREDIENTS

1 3/4 cups powdered sugar
4 1/2 teaspoons meringue powder (available under the Wilton brand at Michael's or Deb El at most markets)
4 tablespoons warm water
Edible shimmer dust (silver and white)
Sparkly white decorating sugar

DIRECTIONS

Place all ingredients in a large mixing bowl. Beat on medium-high speed of an electric mixer until well-blended and stiff peaks form and frosting looks creamy. Tint with food coloring, if desired. (If you don't use the frosting right away, cover completely either with plastic wrap or a damp towel over the top of the bowl, so it does not dry out. I just spooned it immediately into the decorating bag, and then put the whole thing in a Ziploc, until ready to decorate cookies.)

Spoon into a decorating bag, fitted with a #2 decorating tip. (You will need a plastic coupler, also, to afix the tip properly onto the bag. These items are available through Kohl's online or Michael's craft stores.)

While you are making your snowflake ornaments, you may wish to sip a mug of Hot Apple Cranberry Spiced Cider.

Hot Apple-Cranberry Spiced Cider

INGREDIENTS

4 cups cranberry juice
6 cups apple cider
Peel of one orange
1 two-inch piece of fresh ginger root, peeled and sliced (optional)
1/2 teaspoon whole clove
3 cinnamon sticks

GARNISH

cinnamon stick
orange slices
fresh cranberries

DIRECTIONS

Combine all ingredients in a crock pot and heat for 4-6 hours. Serve hot in mugs and garnish with orange slices, fresh cranberries and cinnamon stick.

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