

Butter Cookies (6 sheets)

Ingredients:

DOUGH:

3⅓ c all-purpose flour
2 ts baking powder (scant)
1¼ c sugar
1 tb vanilla extract
2¼ st unsalted butter, at room temperature
2 eggs
1 pinch of salt

OPTIONAL (black-and-white cookie dough only):

½ c cocoa powder
2 tb sugar
2 tb milk

DECORATION:

1 egg
sugar sprinkles or chopped nuts



Directions:

Sift flour into a large bowl and mix with baking powder. Cut butter into small pieces. Add sugar, vanilla, butter, eggs and salt into the bowl and mix for a few minutes at slow speed until everything resembles damp beach sand. Continue to mix at medium speed. Soon after, the dough starts holding together in little clumps and eventually forms one big unit.

OPTIONAL STEP (black-and-white cookies only): set up to ⅔ of the dough aside and mix cocoa, extra sugar and extra milk into the remaining ⅓ - you might need a tad more cocoa if you turn ½ of the dough “black” or if you want a strong chocolate taste.

Form cookie dough into a smooth ball without air pockets, then flatten the ball lightly, wrap it in foil and refrigerate for an hour or two. (The dough can be made a few days in advance, or even be frozen for a short time. Just make sure it's not rock-hard when it gets rolled out in the next step)

Using a non-stick surface like a silpat sheet, roll out the dough until it's about ⅛ inch high and evenly flat. Use flour only when needed to prevent sticking to the rolling pin.

Cut out cookies and place them on a non-stick baking sheet, about ½ inch apart from each other. Whisk an egg in a small bowl and brush a very thin layer of egg mixture on the raw cookies. It will give them some extra shine and also help any sprinkles to hold on to the surface. Decorate (if you like).

Bake for 12-15 minutes at 350°F until they turn ever so slightly golden. These cookies don't taste good if they're too dark and it pays off to watch them during the last minutes to decide on the right moment (i spoiled too many batches as a kid...)