

Salt and Serenity

Simple Sugar Cookies

This recipe comes from Karen DeMasco's inspirational book, "**The Craft of Baking.**"

6 ounces (1 ½ sticks) unsalted butter at room temperature

½ cup granulated sugar

1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

1 large egg

2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon kosher salt

1 ounce unsweetened chocolate, melted (optional)

Pink paste food colouring (optional)

1. In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the butter, sugar and vanilla on medium speed until well combined, about 3 minutes. Add the egg and beat until well combined. Reduce the speed to low. In three additions, add the flour and salt, beating well after each addition until combined.
2. If you plan to make pink and chocolate dough, divide the dough in half and return one half to the mixer. With the mixer on low speed, add the melted chocolate and mix until just combined. Remove chocolate dough and put other half of plain dough in mixer. Add a tiny amount (less than a 1/8 of a teaspoon) of pink colouring to the dough and mix on medium speed until well combined. This will give you pale pink dough. If you want it darker, add more pink paste.
3. Divide both the pink and chocolate doughs in half. Working with one piece at a time, roll the dough, ¼ inch thick, between 2 sheets of parchment paper. Leaving the dough sandwiched between the parchment layers, stack on a baking sheet and freeze until firm, 15-20 minutes.
4. Adjust the oven racks to the upper and lower middle positions and heat the oven to 350 degrees F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper.
5. Remove 1 dough sheet from the freezer; place on work surface. Peel off top parchment sheet and gently lay it back in place. Flip the dough over; peel off and discard second parchment layer.
6. Cut the dough using cookie cutters of your choice. Transfer shapes to prepared baking sheets, using a wide metal spatula, spacing them ¾ inches apart. Set scraps aside. Repeat with remaining dough until baking sheets are full.
7. Bake cookies until light brown, about 11 minutes. Let cool 5 minutes on sheet. Transfer cookies to rack; cool.
8. Gently reroll dough scraps between 2 sheets of parchment, chill and cut out more cookies. Transfer to cookie sheets and bake as above.

