

Salt and Serenity

Brown Sugar Heart Cookies

Recipe adapted from the December 2000 issue of Bon Appetit magazine.

Makes about 24 heart cookies, depending on the size of your cookie cutters. I suggest flavouring the royal icing with freeze dried raspberries. You could substitute any freeze-dried fruit. Freeze-dried strawberries, blueberries, peach and blackberry are all delicious and create lovely hues.

Cookie Dough:

227 grams (1 cup) unsalted butter, room temperature

213 grams (1 cup, packed) golden brown sugar

1 large egg

1 teaspoon vanilla bean paste or vanilla extract

346 grams (2²/₃) cups all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon baking powder

½ teaspoon Diamond Crystal kosher salt

Raspberry Royal Icing:

28 grams (1 cup) freeze dried raspberries

227 grams (2 Cups) powdered sugar

2 Tablespoons meringue powder

¼ cup warm water, plus more for thinning to flood consistency

1-2 teaspoons lemon juice

½ teaspoon vanilla extract

1. Using electric mixer, beat butter and sugar in large bowl until fluffy. Beat in egg and vanilla. Sift flour, baking powder and salt and stir to blend well. Add dry ingredients to mixer and mix just until dry ingredients are incorporated. Turn dough out onto lightly floured surface and knead gently 1 minute.
2. Scrape dough out onto a work surface and divide it 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.
3. Adjust the oven racks to the upper and lower middle positions and heat the oven to 350°F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Remove 1 dough sheet from the freezer and 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.

4. Cut the dough using cookie cutters of your choice. Transfer shapes to prepared baking sheets, using a wide metal spatula, spacing them $\frac{3}{4}$ inches apart. Set scraps aside. Repeat with remaining dough until baking sheets are full.
5. Bake cookies until light brown, about 11 minutes. Let cool 5 minutes on sheet. Transfer cookies to rack; cool.
6. Gently reroll dough scraps between 2 sheets of parchment, chill and cut out more cookies. Transfer to cookie sheets and bake as above.
7. Place the freeze-dried raspberries into a food processor or spice grinder and process until finely ground into a powder. Strain powder through a fine sieve and discard the seeds.
8. In the bowl of an electric mixer combine powdered sugar and meringue powder.
9. Add the water and extract slowly. Beat at medium-high speed until stiff peaks form (about 5-7 minutes). Add half the raspberry powder and beat until fully incorporated. Taste and see if you want a stronger raspberry flavour and adjust accordingly.
10. To test for the right consistency, lift up the whisk attachment over the bowl of royal icing. If the icing that drips off disappears back into the bowl within 10 seconds, your consistency is perfect. If it's too thick, add more water. If it's too thin add more icing sugar.
11. Fit a disposable piping bag with a [Wilton #3 tip](#). Fill bag halfway with icing. Use a twist tie to close bag. Pipe a thin border around the edge of the cookies. Fit a second disposable icing bag with a Wilton #5 tip. Fill bag halfway with icing. Use a twist tie to close bag. Flood the center of the cookie with icing. Use a toothpick to nudge icing into the bare areas.
12. Set cookies aside for 24 hours to allow the icing to dry.