

Cookie/Cake Decorating Tutorials

The following tutorials were taken from <http://annies-eats.com>

Part Four - Fun with Fondant

For so long I have seen cakes, cupcakes and more decorated with fondant and absolutely loved the way they looked. The smooth finish and ability to mold it into anything you want allows so many fun and creative ideas to take shape. The gorgeous end products always looked so great that for a long time, I didn't think it was something I was capable of doing myself. Then I decided to make an attempt at fondant for Andrew's birthday cake this year and it was far easier than I ever could have imagined.

So, for anyone else who has ever been as intimidated as I was, fear no longer! I decided to create this little tutorial to help you all realize how simple fondant is to work with, and how fun it can be. If you are capable of playing with Play-doh, you can decorate with fondant!

I've been wanting to do this post for quite some time, but was looking for a reason to make some fondant cupcakes. Then my food blogging buddy [Elly](#) shared the happy news with me that she is expecting her first baby. She mentioned she was looking for a fun way to announce the pregnancy on her blog, but didn't have the energy to bake anything (I don't blame her – growing a baby is tiring!) I gladly offered to bake something for her announcement, and decided to use this as an opportunity to make this little how-to guide. Head over to [her blog](#) to congratulate her on the new addition!



Supplies you will need:

A batch of fondant (homemade or store-bought – See part six for the recipe)

Vegetable shortening (this is key – you will use it frequently throughout the process)

Gel icing colors

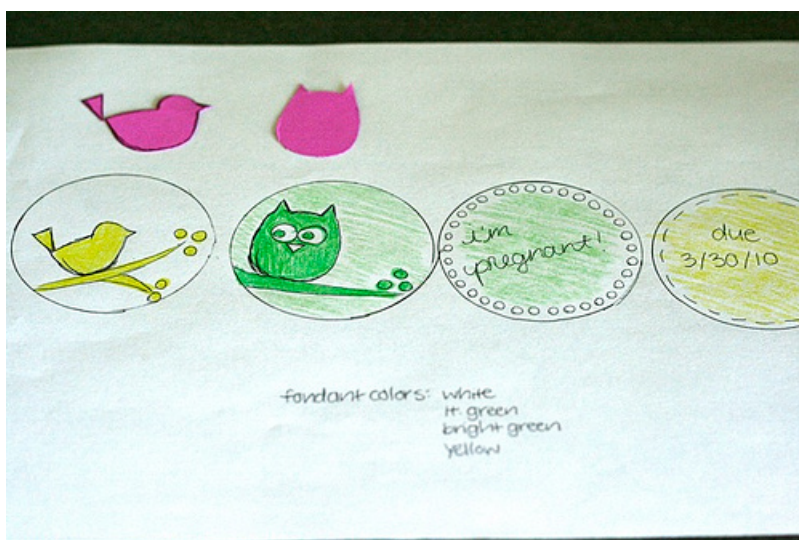
Toothpicks

Buttercream in a pastry bag for extra detailing, if desired



Also, a batch of frosting to help the fondant adhere to your cupcakes. I always use my favorite vanilla buttercream. (See part six for the recipe)

A mat or work surface for rolling and cutting the fondant;
 A fondant rolling pin; Circular cutters to cut the base rounds of fondant (I don't have graduated circular cutters, so I just use whatever I can find around the kitchen); A variety of other items that might be useful for cutting shapes, like small circles (pastry tips work wonderfully for me); A small sharp knife for cutting out freehand shapes (I bought a craft knife to use solely for this purpose)

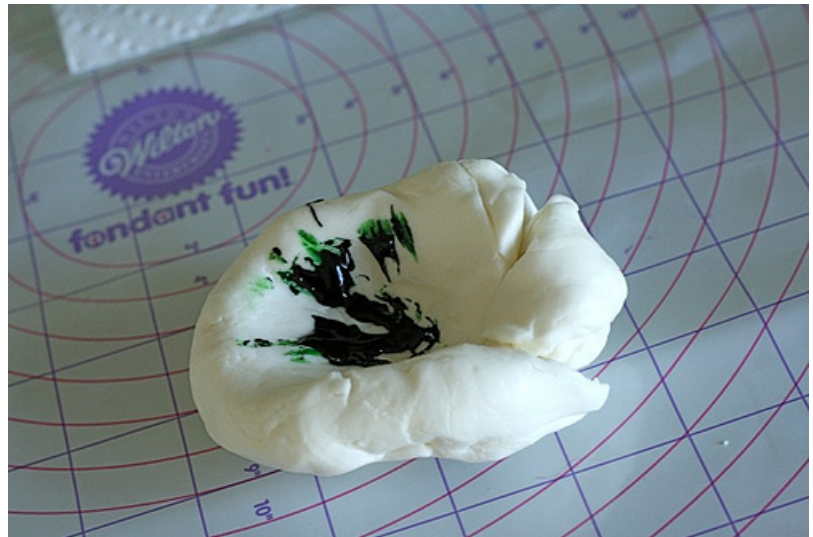


You also need – a plan! I actually make this long before gathering all of my supplies. I always find that sketching out my ideas before starting such projects really helps when it comes time to create. I also used my sketch to trace some shape templates (the pink card stock). These helped guide my cutting later in the process, and helped ensure that all of the little critters were the same size.



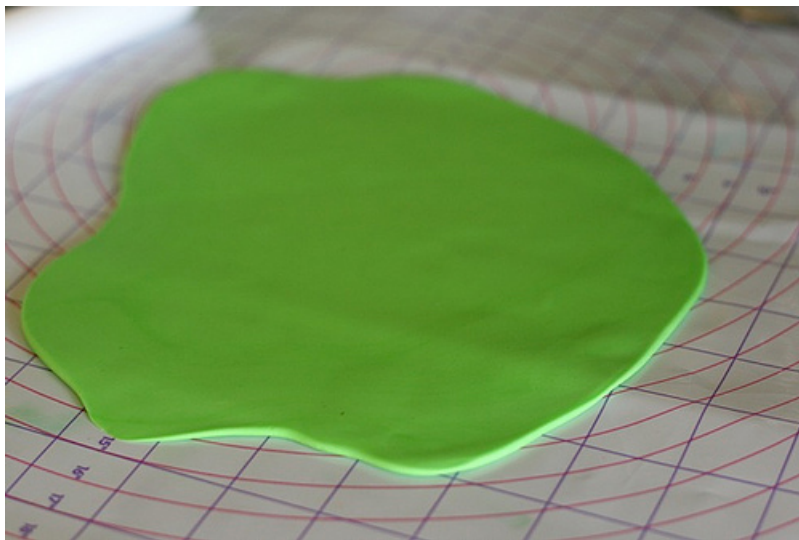
You will need a batch of cupcakes frosted in a thinner, uniform layer of buttercream frosting.

Take a hunk of fondant and smear some of the gel coloring into the center. Fold the edges around the gel and start kneading the fondant to evenly distribute the color. You can use any method of kneading you would like, but I try to keep the main deposit of color in the center rather than on the outside to prevent too much of it getting on my hands. (I think one of my fingers was dyed for two weeks after Andrew's birthday!)



As you knead, you will start to see a marbled effect. Just keep going until you are happy with the distribution, adding more dye if necessary to achieve your desired color. If at any time during kneading the fondant starts to feel dry or tear, rub a very small amount of vegetable shortening on your hands and continue working. This will help the fondant stay moist.

Repeat with remaining hunks of fondant until you have all the colors you need. Any fondant that is not in use should be wrapped in plastic wrap and sealed in a plastic bag to prevent it from drying out.



Before rolling out your fondant, use the vegetable shortening to lightly grease the work surface and the rolling pin. This is key – it prevents everything from sticking. Roll out your first hunk of fondant into a very thin sheet. There are rolling pin guides available to ensure a uniform thickness but I just eyeball it.

Use a round cutter that is just slightly bigger than the circumference of the top of your cupcake to cut out a round of fondant. I tried a few different items before I settled on Andrew's sippy cup lid – it was the perfect size.





Lay the round of fondant on top of the cupcake and gently smooth the fondant onto the cupcake so that it adheres evenly. I find that holding the cupcake upside down with the fondant-covered top in my cupped palm and gently turning it helps to smooth it nicely.

Repeat this process until all of your cupcakes are covered.



Now we're ready to decorate with fondant shapes and embellishments. I cut out all the shapes at once so that I can easily add them all together and make sure they are placed correctly in relation to each other. This pastry bag tip was the perfect size for the owl eyeballs.

I used the little shape templates I had cut out of card stock to trace the shapes of all the birds with my sharp craft knife. The edges of the shape may look ragged after cutting, so just gently smooth them with your fingers.



Finally, “glue” the shapes on to the top of each cupcake by dipping your finger in water or a flavored extract and brushing a light layer on the back of the fondant shape, just enough to help it stick.

That’s it! Get ready to make some cute creations using your new medium.

Other Hints and Tips:

- You always have to frost a cake with some sort of frosting before using fondant, otherwise it has nothing to stick to.
 - I make Marshmallow Fondant a lot. I love it. I have found that adding 1 Tablespoon of corn syrup to the recipe helps it stretch and hold a little better without tearing. Just...you know....for when you make all those oodles of fondant cakes in the future!
 - This recipe makes a LOT! I can't remember exactly, but I'm pretty sure when I weighed it, it was close to 4 lbs. Can cut recipe down.
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