

Cookie/Cake Decorating Tutorials

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

Part Two - How to Decorate with Royal Icing

I have posted many times about sugar cookies I have decorated with royal icing. I just don't think you can beat the gorgeous detailing and smooth finish that royal icing provides. Though I have done my best to share all my tips and tricks in other posts, many readers have requested a "how to" post with step-by-step photos. So for those of you who need the visual guide, let's decorate with royal icing!



Let's start out with a list of what you will need:
A batch of sugar cookies to decorate (this is my favorite recipe – See part six for the recipe)
A batch of royal icing (you may need more than one batch, depending on how many colors you use, and how many cookies you decorated – See part six for the recipe)
Icing gel colors – these are best because they create bright colors without affecting the consistency of the icing (unlike liquid food coloring)
Small airtight containers for each color of icing you plan to use
Spoons
Toothpicks
Disposable pastry bags fitted with small round tips (I like size 2 for most purposes)
Squeeze bottles (not pictured here, but these make the whole process much easier)





Once you have all your supplies together, invert the pastry bags so that they will be ready to be filled with icing.



Divide the batch of royal icing between the various airtight containers and color each as desired.



Transfer the colored icings to the prepared pastry bags. You do not have to use all of the icing you color, only as much as you think you will need for piping. Leave any excess in the container and cover with the airtight lid while the icing is not in use.



Pipe outlines around the edges of your cookies. To keep your lines as smooth as possible and reduce stress on your body, do this seated at a table and keep one elbow or forearm steady against your work surface. Keep the tip of your pastry bag very close to the cookie as you pipe, to avoid the “squiggles”. (The more space between your tip and the cookie, the more room for the icing to move where you do not want it.) Let the icing outlines set for at least one hour before proceeding.





With any of the piping bags that are not in use, store them upright in a drinking glass with a very small amount of water in the bottom. This prevents the icing in the tip from hardening.

Now that the cookies have been outlined, we will make the thinned icing to flood the centers of the cookies. To do this, use a portion of the thicker icing in its airtight container. Add water, a very small amount at a time (maybe $\frac{1}{2}$ -1 tsp.), and stir well until the water is incorporated. Continue this process, thinning the icing until you reach the desired consistency. For the best flooding icing, you want it to run off the back of a spoon... And be quickly reabsorbed into the icing still in the container. I aim for the icing to disappear back into the icing below in about 5-10 seconds.





Once the icing has been appropriately thinned, let it stand for about 5-10 minutes. This allows bubbles incorporated into the icing during the thinning process to rise to the surface. After the bubbles have risen, give the icing one gentle stir around the surface to pop these bubbles, and transfer the icing to a squeeze bottle.

Fill the center of the outlined cookies with the thinned icing.





Use a toothpick to help the flooding icing reach the edges.

If you notice any air bubbles that have made it into the flooded icing, pop them with the tip of the toothpick.

Repeat this process until all the outlines have been filled.





Let the cookies set, until the icing has set completely.

Let the flooding dry completely (about 8 hours) before doing more icing on top.

Once the icing has set, it will have a matte sheen and a hard surface.

Use remaining thick icing in pastry bags to pipe detailing onto the cookies. Let this icing set at least one hour.

And you're done! That's all there is to it.

Package them up in little cellophane baggies, tie with ribbons, and you have some very adorable cookies for any occasion!

