

Rabbit, Rabbit

Ingredients:

Rabbit-shaped cookies

Sugarpaste (or rolled fondant):

light brown, dark brown, white, pink, black

Paste food colouring: dark brown

Powdered food colouring: pink, white, brown

White alcohol (or lemon extract)

Icing sugar (or confectioner's sugar)

Instructions:

1 Dust the work surface with icing sugar and roll out some light brown sugarpaste. Flip it over and paint the back with water using the flat paintbrush.

2 Cover the cookie with the sugarpaste, taking it right down over the edges. Smooth in place then trim off any excess at the back with a knife.

3 Mark the positions of the facial features with a ball tool. Start in the centre with a small indent for the nose and place two larger oval indents above this on either side for the eyes.

4 Rub a ball tool into the middle of each of the ears to make long oval indentations. Roll small sausages of pink sugarpaste, stick one into each indentation, then flatten and smooth them into place with your fingers.

Equipment:

23cm (9in) rolling pin

Ball tool

Flower/leaf veining tool

Fine paintbrush

12mm (½in) flat paintbrush

Small sharp knife

5 Roll a marble-sized ball of light brown sugarpaste and cut it in half. Roll each half into a cone shape. Stick each one horizontally, with the point innermost, on to the cookie, just below the nose indentation.

6 Flatten them slightly then repeatedly drag a veining tool over the surface from the inner point out towards the outer edge of the shape, to create the fur effect.

7 Use the veining tool to add a few more textured lines to the chin area, around the sides of the cookie, around the bottom of the ears and above the nose. Dust over the textured areas with brown and white powdered food colouring.

8 Stick a tiny teardrop of white sugarpaste in the middle underneath the textured cheek area. Flatten then divide in half with a veining tool to make the teeth.

9 Softly dust the cheeks and the middle of the ears with a little pink powdered food colouring.

10 Make a small cone of brown sugarpaste; insert it point downwards into the indentation made for the nose. Flatten slightly then indent at the bottom on either side for the nostrils. Paint with a little dark brown paste food colouring mixed with white alcohol.

11 Make the eyes following the instructions on page 55.



Prepare the white rabbit in the same way, just change the colour of the icing to white and, when painting the eyes, paint long eyelashes for a girl.

Baking cookies

I have used this recipe to make all of the cookies in this book. It makes a firm and tasty cookie, which is simple to make and provides an ideal base for decorating.

The quantities given here are enough to make approximately fifteen medium-sized cookies.

Ingredients:

200g (7oz) caster sugar
200g (7oz) unsalted butter or margarine
1 medium egg
400g (14oz) plain all-purpose flour
Additional flour for kneading and rolling out

Preparation time: 8 minutes

Cooking time: 8 to 10 minutes, gas mark 4 (180°C/350°F)

Alternative flavours:

Chocolate cookies: replace 50g (2oz) plain flour with 50g (2oz) cocoa powder

Orange or lemon zesty cookies: add the zest of one orange or one lemon

Vanilla cookies: add the seeds from one vanilla pod or ½ teaspoon of good quality vanilla essence



Method:

- 1 Place the caster sugar and unsalted butter or margarine into a mixing bowl, together with any flavouring, and lightly cream together.
- 2 Crack one medium egg into a jug and lightly beat with a fork or small whisk.
- 3 Add the beaten egg to the creamed mixture together with all of the plain flour. Gently mix together. If you are using an electric mixer, set it to a slow speed and use the paddle attachment. The mixture will at first look like bread crumbs, which will eventually come together to form a dough.
- 4 Gather up the dough and, if necessary, knead by hand to incorporate all of the ingredients.
- 5 Place in a plastic bag, then into the fridge for at least two hours before use. This helps to stop the cookie dough from spreading during cooking. The cookie dough may be frozen if required. Defrost thoroughly before use.

Baking the cookies:

Cut-out method using cookie cutters

- 1 Pre-heat the oven to gas mark 4 (180°C/350°F). Lightly grease a baking sheet using spray oil.
- 2 Remove the cookie dough from the fridge and lightly knead. On a lightly floured surface, roll out the dough between a pair of marzipan spacers, to obtain an even depth.
- 3 Use cookie cutters to cut out the cookie shapes then place them carefully on to a greased baking sheet using a pallet knife. Cook equally sized cookies together to ensure even baking.
- 4 The cookies should be cooked for 8 to 10 minutes until they are a light golden brown. Remove from the oven and place on a wire rack to cool. The cookies will be soft and springy to the touch at this stage but will firm up as they cool down.

Using cookie treat pans and cookie sticks

Note: only use cookie sticks that state they can be placed in an oven and withstand high temperatures. Lollipop sticks are not suitable.

- 1 Lightly spray the cookie treat pan with some spray oil.
- 2 Take a piece of cookie dough and push it into the cookie treat pan until it fills up the shape to just below the top edge. If you wish to make cookies on sticks, place a stick on to the back of the dough and lightly push in place. Cover the back of the stick with a little more cookie dough and smooth into place. Cook in the same way as described for cut-out method.
- 3 Alternatively, cookie sticks can be inserted into the cookies as soon as they are removed from the oven while the dough is still soft and springy. This method can also be used for cookies made from cut-out shapes.

