

SUNFLOWER SUGAR COOKIES

INGREDIENTS

for the cookie dough

1/2 cup butter, softened

1 cup white sugar

2 eggs

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

2 tablespoons orange juice

2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon baking powder

for the icing and decorating

1/2 cup milk

3 cups confectioners sugar

yellow food coloring gel

brown food coloring gel

brown nonpareil

Optional

wooden skewers to make cookie pops

DIRECTIONS

In mixing bowl, cream together unsalted butter, sugar and egg until light and fluffy. Beat in flour, baking powder, orange juice and vanilla until smooth and well combined. Chill in refrigerator 2-3 hours or until firm enough to be rolled.

Preheat oven to 400F. Roll out half of the dough on a well floured surface to 1/4 inch thickness (be careful to get the surface even, otherwise you will have oddly-browned cookies. Also, do not roll the dough too thin, otherwise you will have hard cookies when they come out of the oven).

Cut with sunflower shaped cookie cutters. Place on cookie sheet lined with silpat or onto parchment paper. If you are making cookie pops, carefully slide a skewer into the cookie (which causes some consternation on arranging them on the cookie sheet -- good luck!). Bake 8-10 minutes or until golden brown at the edges. Cool completely on a wire rack.

To decorate, whisk together milk and confectioners sugar in a small bowl. Divide (2/3 for the yellow, 1/3 for the brown) and then mix in your food coloring. Using a food safe paint brush, color the cookies yellow, then using a piping bag with a very narrow tip, draw a brown circle for the middle. Using more of the icing as "glue" adhere nonpareil to the center. Let harden before placing in an airtight container for storage (up to 1 week).