

# Mix it up

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## Reluctant Chef

BY JENNIFER HARRIS

### Top 5: Rolling with sugar cookies

Valentine's Day is synonymous with chocolate—but it isn't all about chocolate, right? Sugar cookies shaped like hearts dusted with colored sugar, dipped in chocolate or covered with frosting are a big draw at my house. Making them with my daughter has become a treasured family tradition. We have learned from our failures and adjusted to perfect our roll-out and cut cookie game over the years. If we can do it, so can you.

To help get you in the roll-and-bake spirit, here are my top five tips for rolling out sugar cookies.

#### 1. Pick a mix

Yes, making sugar cookies from scratch is preferable, but time is fleeting these days, so don't feel guilty about buying a mix. Some of our favorite mixes are King Arthur Flour, Lindsay's Lipsmackin' Roll-Out & Cut Sugar Cookies from 1-2-3 Gluten Free and Pamela's Products. These mixes produce doughs that are easy to work with and won't fall apart while you're rolling and cutting. And the finished cookies won't crumble, either.

#### 2. Refrigerate

Once the dough is prepared, cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate according to the instructions or until the dough is cold. Refrigeration is key to achieving a texture that allows for easy rolling and cutting. Also, be sure to put the dough back in the refrigerator between batches. If the dough

gets too warm, it will become soft and sticky, making it impossible to work with.

#### 3. Prepare the rolling surface

Do yourself a favor and go buy a large Silpat mat that covers the entirety of your rolling area. This mat creates the perfect surface for cutting and transferring cookies to the baking sheet with minimal sticking. And cleanup is a snap.

#### 4. Get out the cornstarch

I know this may sound strange, but we have found that cornstarch is preferable to use when rolling out dough. Adding rice flour or a flour blend to the dough tends to toughen it and dry out the cookies. Cornstarch has the right texture to prevent sticking and keeps the dough moist without affecting the flavor. Apply cornstarch to your rolling pin and cookie cutters, too.

#### 5. Roll with it

Roll out the cookies to be  $\frac{1}{4}$ - to  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch thick—not too thick nor too thin. We use a stainless steel flexible turner to transfer them to the baking sheet. It does a miraculous job of keeping the shape intact without cracking. OXO's flexible turners come in regular and large sizes. They are inexpensive and a welcome addition to any baker's kitchen tool set.

Follow these steps and get ready for beautiful sugar cookies that are crunchy on the edges and soft in the middle. Make a double batch, because they will quickly become a family favorite and disappear in a flash.