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Filling Piping Bags

To fill a piping bag, hold it in your nondominant hand, and fold the top over your hand an inch or two. Make sure the piping bag does not yet have a hole in the tip. Then use your dominant hand to spoon the icing into the bag. Fill the bag about three-quarters of the way full. Squeeze it down toward the bottom of the bag to bring any air bubbles to the top. Hold the top of the bag, and give it a few good twists to ensure the icing doesn't run out the open end.

How Much Icing Will I Need?

It's important to know how many cookies one piping bag will flood so you can plan ahead, especially if you're mixing specific colors that can be difficult to match perfectly if you need to make more. As a general rule, one 10" piping bag, filled three-quarters of the way full, will outline and flood about 8 to 9 standard-size cookies.

Each project in this book lists just one cookie in each shape as required to make the design. But I'd recommend making a whole batch of cookies and icing to practice with, especially on your first few projects. If you prefer to make smaller batches, you can cut the recipes in half or store the extra dough and icing as noted previously.



Vanilla-Almond Sugar Cookie Recipe


Ingredients

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- ½ tsp salt
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1 cup unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ½ tsp almond extract

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS

- Use Watkins brand extract for both vanilla and almond flavoring.

Instructions

- 1 Preheat the oven to 350° F. Prepare a cookie sheet with a silicone baking mat.
- 2 In a medium bowl, combine the flour, salt, and baking powder. Set aside.
- 3 In the bowl of a stand mixer with a whisk attachment, beat the butter and sugar together until light and creamy, 1-2 minutes. Scrape the sides with a spatula as needed. 
- 4 Add the egg and extracts to the bowl. Mix until fully incorporated.
- 5 Add the flour mixture to the bowl. Mix until dough forms. 