Nested NUTRITION

Cut-Out Sugar Cookies

Homemade with love · Dye-free icing that dries hard · Decorate with the kids

MAKES	CALORIES	CARBS	FAT	PROTEIN
30	160	25 g	6.5 g	2 g
3-inch cookies	per iced cookie	per cookie	per cookie	per cookie

INGREDIENTS

COOKIES

- 2½ cups (310g) unbleached pastry flour (Bob's Red Mill or King Arthur)
- 1 tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp fine sea salt
- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup cane sugar
- 1 egg (room temperature)
- 1 tbsp vanilla extract
- ½ tsp almond extract (optional, tastes like a bakery)

ICING

- 2½ cups powdered sugar
- 2 tbsp whole milk (plus more to thin)
- 1 tbsp honey or light syrup (makes it dry hard)
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- Beet, matcha or turmeric powder (for tinting)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Cream 3 full minutes.** Beat the butter and sugar until pale and fluffy, then mix in the egg and extracts. Don't cut this short — it's what keeps them tender.
2. **Add the dry.** Whisk the flour, baking powder, and salt, then mix in just until the dough comes together.
3. **Chill 1 hour.** Two flattened discs, wrapped. Cold dough holds its shape — warm dough spreads and your trees come out as blobs. Fresh-milled flour: give it at least 2 hours.
4. **Roll ¼ inch thick.** Between two sheets of parchment instead of flouring the counter. Cut shapes and move them to a lined sheet.
5. **Bake 9–11 min at 350°F.** Pull them when the edges are just set and the centers still look underdone. They firm up as they cool.
6. **Cool completely.** Five minutes on the sheet, then a rack. Ice a warm cookie and the icing slides right off.
7. **Mix, tint, decorate.** Whisk the icing smooth, thinning with milk ½ tsp at a time until it spreads the way you like. Add color a pinch at a time, then dry 4–6 hours before stacking.

THE FLOUR

Both suggested brands are soft wheat and unbleached. Unbleached all-purpose works too, just sturdier. Milling your own? 310g soft white berries, chill 2 hours, and add 1–2 tsp milk if the dough cracks.

DYE-FREE COLORS

Beet powder for pink to red, matcha or spirulina for green, a pinch of turmeric for yellow, butterfly pea for blue. Liquid dye-free color is fine here — icing is water-based already.

ABOUT THE ICING

Straight from the bowl it's thick enough to pipe details. Add milk ½ tsp at a time to thin it for spreading or dunking. The honey is what makes it set hard and glossy instead of staying tacky.

MAKE AHEAD

Dough keeps 3 days in the fridge, 3 months frozen. Undecorated baked cookies freeze 2 months. Decorated ones are best within 5 days in a tin.

Macros are estimates per iced 3-inch cookie. Boxed holiday tree cakes run about 220–390 each.