

Ready-to-use dough leaves time for the real fun

If you revel in all the fun of Christmas baking projects but find time at a premium, try these ideas to indulge your creative spirit. The decorated creations go together quickly, so you can prepare them in just a spare hour or two.

The big timesaver is ready-to-slice refrigerated cookie dough, eliminating the need to mix and roll cookies. Instead you use your valuable time on the fun part — assembling and decorating.

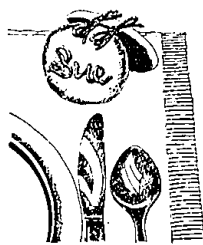
Turn your imagination loose and design Miniature Cookie Houses fit for the Sugar Plum Fairy. Unlike most traditional cookie house recipes, this one doesn't require intricate rolling and cutting dough shapes. You simply slice the refrigerated sugar cookie dough, following the instructions to straighten edges of the dough circles with a ruler.

To "build" the four-inch-tall houses, assemble the baked and cooled cookies using decorator icing. Use more icing to add "snow" on the roofs, "landscaping" and other decorative trim. Shiny or brightly colored candies can add more charming accents.

For an even simpler project that youngsters will enjoy, too, make Holiday Favors, turning the cookies into colorful Christmas tree decorations or cookie placecards.

Before baking the cookie slices, you use a plastic drinking straw to "cut" one or two holes in each slice, depending upon your use. After the cookies have baked and cooled, use colored icing and candies to create holiday designs or to write names for placecards or take-home favors.

For ornaments, thread colored yarn through the hole on each decorated cookie and hang on a tree branch. You can set up a miniature tree by your



front door and give guests an ornament as a take-home favor.

The placecard is made by tying two cookies together, so they stand, tent fashion, to mark each guest's place at the holiday table.

MINIATURE COOKIE HOUSES

17-oz. roll refrigerated ready-to-slice sugar cookie dough
White and tinted decorator's frosting
Decorator tubes and tips
Candy-coated chocolate pieces, caramels and decorator candies

Heat oven to 350°F. Slice well-chilled dough into 36 slices about 1/4-inch thick.

To form sides: Place 16 slices on ungreased cookie sheets; allow to soften slightly. Using ruler or other sturdy flat utensil, gently push in sides of 16 slices to form 16 squares.

To form roof pieces: Place 8 slices on ungreased cookie sheet; flatten each slightly. Using ruler, gently push in one

side of each slice to straighten edge.

To form bases: Place three slices, sides touching, on ungreased cookie sheet to form triangle shape. Repeat with 9 more slices to form three more bases.

Bake at 350° for 9-11 minutes, or until edges are golden brown. Using ruler, immediately restraighten edge of roof pieces, and all edges of side pieces. Cool 1 minute, remove to cooling rack. Cool completely on rack before decorating.

To form houses: Use 4 side pieces, 1 base and 2 roof pieces for each house. Pipe white frosting on one edge of one side piece; stand piece on edge, frosting down, on base. Repeat with remaining side pieces joining at corners to form an open cube. Allow to stand 15 to 20 minutes for icing to set.

Generously pipe white frosting on top edges of two opposite side pieces. Place roof pieces, straight edges together over frosted edges to form an A-frame roof. Pipe additional white frosting at top where two straight edges of roof pieces meet.

Repeat with remaining pieces. Decorate as desired with tinted frosting and candies. 4 cookie houses.

*DECORATOR'S FROSTING

In medium bowl, beat 2 egg whites with 1/4 teaspoon cream of tartar until soft peaks form. Add 1 cup powdered sugar; beat 5 minutes or until stiff peaks form. Add 1 additional cup powdered sugar; beat 5 minutes longer until very stiff. Keep frosting covered with damp paper towels. 1 1/2 cups.

HOLIDAY FAVORS

17-oz. roll refrigerated ready-to-slice sugar cookie dough

Plastic drinking straw or wooden skewer
Tinted decorator frosting
Decorator tubes and tips
36 (6-inch) pieces of yarn

Heat oven to 350°. Slice well-chilled dough into 36 slices, about 1/4-inch thick. Place slices 2-inches apart on un-

greased cookie sheet.

Bake at 350° for 9-11 minutes or until golden brown around edges. For ornaments, immediately use plastic drinking straw to make a small hole, about 1/4 inch from edge of cookie to form hanger for ornaments. (For placecards, make two holes, 1/4 inch apart, close to edge of each cookie. Cool 1

minute; remove to cooling rack. Cool completely before decorating.

For ornaments, thread one piece of yarn through hole and tie. (For placecards, use two pieces of yarn. Tie two cookies together loosely by threading yarn through holes.) Decorate as desired. 36 cookie ornaments or 18 cookie placecards.



These cookie houses are easy to make when you eliminate a lot of the work by using refrigerated cookie dough.

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