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Holiday Trees

Makes about 6 dozen small cookies

These petite trees perfectly capture the season ahead! The buttery spritz dough takes on a green color prior to baking; the resulting trees are garlanded with a drizzle of vanilla icing and festooned with ornaments of colorful nonpareils. You'll quickly generate a forest of cookie fun ready to share and to enjoy!

Cookie Dough Ingredients:

1 cup unsalted butter, (2 sticks), room temperature
1 cup white sugar
1 large egg
2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
1 teaspoon table salt
3 cups all-purpose flour

Green food coloring

Icing & Embellishment Ingredients:

1 cup powdered sugar
1 tablespoon light corn syrup
1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
2-3 teaspoons milk or heavy cream
Multi-colored nonpareils

Directions:

1. In a large mixing bowl and hand mixer, or the bowl of a stand mixer outfitted with the paddle, beat the butter and sugar until uniformly creamy (but do not mix too much; keep the incorporated air to a minimum). Add the egg, vanilla, and salt; beat again until evenly combined. Add the flour in two or three portions; beat after each addition, but do not overmix. Add green food coloring to the desired shade of green.
2. Form the dough into a cylinder that somewhat matches the cylinder of the cookie press. Press and pack the cylinder such that air pockets are eliminated. Complete the assembly of the cookie press by affixing the tree disc and adding the top plunger mechanism.
3. Press the cookie dough onto cool, ungreased cookie sheets. Hold the cookie press vertically while pressing; lift the press straight upward between cookies. Chill the pressed cookies for 15 minutes in the refrigerator.
4. Bake at 350°F for 9-10 minutes, or until the cookie edges barely begin to turn a golden color. Allow the cookies to cool and set on the baking sheet for 2-3 minutes, then transfer to a cooling rack to finish the cooling. (Do not allow the cookies to fully cool on the baking sheet; they will stick and be difficult to remove.)
5. In a small bowl, mix the icing by whisking the powdered sugar, corn syrup, vanilla, and a teaspoon of the milk. Adjust the icing's consistency with additional milk until a nice drizzling character is achieved – we like a 3-second ribbon consistency for drizzling.
6. Outfit a piping bag with a small circular tip (we used a #3); fill the bag with the icing (or, use a whisk or fork) drizzle threads of icing onto the spritz trees. Immediately sprinkle the nonpareils onto the trees, or add other desired embellishments. Allow the icing to dry completely prior to stacking or packaging.