



RED VELVET CRACKLE COOKIES

Makes about 36 cookies

Here, I have taken traditional chocolate crackle cookies, which look like they are covered with snow, and given them a holiday accent by making them red velvet. Be sure to coat the cookie balls generously with confectioners' sugar before you bake them to guarantee that the snowlike effect is stunning.

4 ounces semisweet chocolate, finely chopped
1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1/4 cup Dutch-process cocoa powder
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 cup (4 ounces) unsalted butter, at room temperature
1 1/4 cups firmly packed golden brown sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 eggs
1 tablespoon red gel food coloring
1/2 cup confectioners' sugar

Place the chocolate in a small heatproof bowl set over (not touching) gently simmering water in a saucepan. Heat, stirring often, until melted. Remove from the heat.

Sift the flour, baking powder, and cocoa powder into a bowl, then whisk in the salt. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, combine the butter and brown sugar and beat on medium speed for about 3 minutes, until light and creamy. Add the vanilla and then the eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition and stopping to scrape down the sides of the bowl as needed. Add the melted chocolate and food coloring and beat until evenly colored. On low speed, add the flour mixture and beat until just incorporated. Cover and refrigerate the dough for 1 hour.

Position two oven racks, evenly spaced, in the middle of the oven and preheat the oven to 350°F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.

Sift the confectioners' sugar into a shallow bowl.

Scoop up 1 tablespoon of the dough, roll it between your palms into a ball, and then roll the ball in the confectioners' sugar, coating it generously. Place the cookies on the prepared sheet pans, spacing them evenly and arranging twelve cookies on each sheet. Lightly flatten each ball with the palm of your hand.

Bake the cookies for about 14 minutes, until deep cracks appear on the surface, switching the baking sheets between the racks halfway through baking. Transfer the baking sheets to wire

racks and let cool for 5 minutes, then carefully transfer the cookies to the racks. Repeat to bake the remaining dough. Let cool completely before serving.

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