

# Holiday Cookie Decorating

Homestead Wife Life · HWL Baking Series · Est. 2025

## Royal Icing (HWL Method)

### Ingredients:

900 g (about 7½ cups) powdered sugar

30 g (3 Tbsp) meringue powder

158 ml (⅔ cup) water

60 ml (¼ cup) light corn syrup

15 ml (1 Tbsp) butter bakery emulsion

15 ml (1 Tbsp) vanilla extract

5 ml (1 tsp) white food coloring

### Method:

1. Make sure your mixing bowl and beater are completely grease-free. Wipe with vinegar if needed.
2. Combine powdered sugar and meringue powder. Mix on low.
3. Add half the water, corn syrup, and flavorings. Mix on low and scrape the bowl.
4. If dry, add more water until slightly glossy. Add white coloring.
5. Mix on medium for 30–45 seconds, just until light and fluffy. Do not overmix.
6. Adjust consistency as needed:
  - Too stiff → add a few drops of water.
  - Too soft → add a little powdered sugar.

## HWL Technique Notes

### Color Matching:

Divide the royal icing into bowls equal to your color count. Mix all colors while the icing is still at outline consistency. Bag the outline icing first, then thin the remaining colored icing for flooding. This ensures your outline and flood colors always match.

### Resting the Icing:

Let the tinted icings rest for at least 30 minutes before use. The colors deepen beautifully as the pigments hydrate.

#### Baking Schedule:

Bake cookies the day before decorating. Freshly baked cookies are too soft and can cause cracking or sinking in your royal icing.

#### Mixing Reminder:

Do not overwhip. Overmixed icing dries chalky and brittle instead of smooth and shiny.

#### Storage Tip:

Cover unused icing tightly with plastic wrap pressed to the surface or transfer to sealed piping bags to prevent crusting.

#### Beginner Decorating Sequence (HWL Flow)

1. Outline - Use thicker royal icing to define the cookie's edge.
2. Flood - Fill the interior with thinned icing; use a scribe to guide it into corners.
3. Dry - Let cookies dry uncovered at room temperature until fully set (overnight is best).
4. Detail - Add linework, swirls, bows, or sugar accents once the base is firm.
5. Dusting & Sparkle - Sprinkle fine sugar or edible glitter while the top layer is slightly tacky for a snowy finish.