



Peppermint Creams

Peppermint creams are very simple and inexpensive to make and require no cooking. They make a very nice present for friends or relatives (you could wrap them up in a small box if you made one in the container activity!).

The task here is to design a new shape for the peppermint creams and then to make some in that shape, following this basic recipe.



Equipment

1. Two hundred and twenty five grams of icing sugar.
2. The white of one egg (you need to start with just the egg!).
3. A small bottle of peppermint essence (you can buy this from any grocery store or supermarket).

Safety Stuff

Be especially careful when you try any of these projects. Kitchens are very dangerous places: most things seem to be very hot or very sharp! Always check with an adult before you begin, and make sure they know what you're going to make.

Read through the recipe before you start. Write out a list of what you need, but have a look in the cupboards before you go shopping, in case there are any ingredients that you already have and so won't need to buy. If there are, check with an adult before you use them. Otherwise you might have eaten somebody else's tea! Before you start cooking, make sure that where you're going to be working is clean and tidy. Have everything ready that you'll need, but clear away any extra items so that you have plenty of space to work in. Successful cooking requires a lot of time and patience, so you need to be well organised and prepared right from the start.

Always wash and dry your hands before you begin. If your hair is long, tie it back while you're cooking. You should also wear an apron to protect your clothes (plastic ones work very well) and remember to roll up your sleeves!

It will be very useful to have an adult around to help you when you work. You'll often need to use sharp knives, scissors or electrical equipment when preparing food, so make sure you're especially careful with these as they can be dangerous.

You should also ask an adult to help you when you're transferring food to or from the oven or stove top. Always turn saucepan or frying pan handles to the side of the cooker, so you don't catch yourself on them, and use oven gloves when you're handling hot

things. Otherwise you're likely to drop your food all over the floor, as well as burn your fingers!

Don't touch electrical equipment, plugs or switches when your hands are wet as you might get an electric shock, and never leave the kitchen when something is cooking - you don't know what might happen whilst you're gone!

If you spill things, clear it up straight away (use a clean, damp cloth to wipe work surfaces). You should also clear up anything that is spilt on the floor so it doesn't become slippery. (Don't use the same cloth to wipe your work surfaces and the floor.) Keep a rubbish bin nearby when you're cooking, so that you can easily put things in it as you go along, rather than letting the rubbish pile up.

Leave the kitchen tidy when you finish, otherwise you might not be allowed back in for a while!

Steps

Step One

First, design and make a pastry cutter which you will use to cut out your peppermint cream shapes. The cutter must be strong enough to cut through the peppermint cream paste, and the shape should be about 2 - 4cm across. Can you think of a material that you can use to make your cutter?

Now for the recipe. Ask an adult to help you separate the egg. You only need the white of the egg for this recipe, but save the yolk and you may be able to use it somewhere else.

Lightly beat the egg white until it is soft and fluffy. You can do this with a whisk, or ask an adult to help you use an electric whisk, which will be quicker and easier.

Step Two

Sieve the icing sugar into a bowl.

Stir the beaten egg white into the sugar, a little at a time. Continue adding it until you have a paste.

When your paste is ready, add a few drops of peppermint essence. Make sure you add only a few drops: the flavour will be much too strong otherwise.



Step Three

Use your hands to knead the whole mixture well - it should be thick and quite flexible and bendy, a bit like elastic.

When your mixture is ready, you need to prepare some greaseproof paper to put the peppermint creams onto. Use either waxed paper (for example from a cornflake or other cereal packet - although wash it first) or non-stick greaseproof paper.

Step Four

Sieve a little bit of extra icing sugar onto the paper. Place the peppermint paste onto the paper and cover it with a second piece of greaseproof paper. Use a rolling pin to roll out the paste into a flat piece about half a centimetre thick.

Use the shaped pastry cutter you have made to cut out small shapes from the peppermint paste.



Step Five

When these peppermint paste shapes are all cut out, leave them to dry for about 24 hours.

Your peppermint creams are now ready! You should store them in an airtight container until it's time to eat them. That way they'll stay fresh and keep their taste.

