MALTED MILK speckled

chocolate sugar cookies



*If you love malted milk robin eggs in the Spring (or Whoppers year around), you’re going to love* ***Malted Milk Chocolate Sugar Cookies*** *- rich in chocolate flavor and incredibly soft.* *Malted milk powder amplifies the flavor of chocolate (much like espresso powder), joins the sugar in tenderizing the cookies, and adds an added layer of flavor that takes classic chocolate sugar cookies from good to great! Topped with a beautiful robin’s egg blue royal icing and decorated with a vanilla & chocolate speckle, these are almost too pretty to eat – but I’m sure you can convince someone to give them a try. Happy Spring!*

**INGREDIENTS**:

**MALTED MILK SUGAR COOKIES:**

2 cups (250g) all-purpose flour

3/4 cup (63g) unsweetened cocoa powder

¼ cup (31g) malted milk powder

2 Tablespoons cornstarch

1 and 1/2 teaspoons baking powder

1/2 teaspoon salt

1 cup unsalted butter (softened to room temperature)

4 ounces block cream cheese (softened to room temperature)

1 cup (200g) granulated sugar

1 large egg (room temperature)

1 Tablespoon pure vanilla extract

¼ cup semisweet chocolate, chopped finely

**FROSTING**: (for Bakery Frosting see SnowflakesandCoffeecakes.com)

**EASY ROYAL ICING**:

4 cups powdered sugar

3 Tablespoons Meringue Powder

1 Tablespoon corn syrup (Karo)

2 Tablespoons flavoring (I use clear vanilla)

8-10+ Tablespoons water (room temperature)

AmeriColor Robin’s Egg Blue Soft Gel Food Coloring (strongly recommended!

 (or you can mix aqua, turquoise and green food coloring to create Robin’s Egg Blue)

**FOR SPECKLE DECORATING**:

1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract

1 teaspoon chocolate extract

1 teaspoon baking cocoa powder

**SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:**

* Cookie cutter(s)
* Rolling pin (wooden Joseph Joseph Rolling Pin works the BEST for these cookies!)
* Large baking sheets
* Silicone Baking Mats or Parchment Paper
* Piping Bags & Tips

**HOW I MAKE THESE**:

1. Set butter, cream cheese and egg out to warm to room temperature.
2. Sift the flour and cocoa powder together in a medium bowl, whisk in the malted milk powder, cornstarch, baking powder and salt; set aside.
3. In a large bowl using a hand-held mixer or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat the butter on medium speed until completely smooth and creamy (about 2 minutes). Add the sugar and beat on medium high speed until light and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Add in the egg and vanilla extract and beat on high speed for another minute. Scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl as needed between additions.
4. Mix in the finely chopped semi-sweet chocolate. This cookie dough will be really soft and creamy!
5. Generously flour your work surface and rolling pin. Divide dough into half and place on top of a parchment paper sized for your baking pans. Roll each half to a ¼-inch thickness (you will need to re-flour your rolling pin periodically to keep the dough from sticking). The rolled-out dough can be any shape, as long as it is evenly 1/4-inch thick. We’re rolling the cookie dough out BEFORE chilling it, which isn’t typical for most sugar cookie recipes – but this is a great trick! The dough is so much easier to roll out before it’s chilled.
6. Stack the pieces, with parchment paper between the two and a single piece of parchment paper on top, onto a baking sheet and refrigerate for at least 2 hours and up to overnight. Chilling is mandatory for this cookie dough, so that the cookies will keep their shape when baked.
7. The next day, preheat oven to 350°.  Line 2-3 large baking pans with parchment paper (I prefer parchment paper over silicone baking mats for these cookies).
8. Remove one of the chilled cookie dough pieces from the refrigerator. The dough will seem very hard, but it’s softer than it appears! Immediately cut into shapes with cookie cutters that have been dipped in flour. Place each cookie about 2 inches apart on prepared baking sheets. Re-roll dough scraps until all the dough is shaped. Repeat with remaining cookie dough.
9. For 3-inch cookies, bake for 10 minutes – the cookies will still appear soft. Make sure you rotate the baking sheet halfway through bake time. If your cookie cutters are smaller than 3 inches, bake for about 9-10 minutes. If your cookie cutters are larger than 3 inches, bake for about 12-13 minutes. Every oven is a little bit different, so watch your first batch when baking and time accordingly. **DO NOT OVERBAKE!** The cookies don’t spread much when they’re baking, so they will stay around ¼-inch thick. These are thick sugar cookies! Be sure not to overbake these as they’ll lose their softness.
10. Allow cookies to cool on the baking sheet for 5 minutes. Transfer the parchment paper together with the cookies to a cooling rack to cool completely. Once completely cool, decorate with Bakery Frosting or Easy Royal Icing and sprinkles if desired. (Bakery Frosting may be easier for little ones…)
11. **TO MAKE EASY ROYAL FROSTING**: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, add the ½ cup room-temperature water and meringue powder and dissolve on low (do not use a whisk attachment) for a minute or two. Once dissolved and slightly frothy, add all the powdered sugar and begin to mix on low. Add the karo syrup as it all starts to come together. Turn your mixer up to medium-high speed and beat for 5 minutes or until stiff peaks form. **BE SURE NOT TO OVERMIX!**  Once still peaks form, it’s enough. If you overmix, the icing can become crumble after it dries on your cookies.
12. **ROBIN’S EGG BLUE**: Add desired food coloring – I used AmeriColor Robin’s Egg Blue Gel Food Coloring (you can also create a beautiful shade of robin’s egg blue with other food coloring - use a few drops of turquoise, a few drops of aqua, and one drop of leaf green) and blend until evenly colored.
13. At this point, you will use the Royal Icing as a base – divide as appropriate and add additional water a little bit at a time so that you have the right consistency for outlining, detail and flooding.
14. For flood consistency (usually what you will use the most of) - the icing should drizzle down in a ribbon and smooth out within 10-15 seconds with the frosting in the bowl. If it's too thick, add a little more water (a teaspoon at a time). If it's too thin, add a little more sifted confectioners' sugar (a tablespoon or two at a time).
15. When you're not working directly with the Royal Icing (for example, you’ve split the icing into separate bowls and colored with a few drops of food coloring), place a damp paper towel directly on the surface of the Royal Icing. It will start crusting immediately when exposed to air, and by placing the damp towel directly on top it will prevent it from hardening.
16. **FROST & DECORATE!** Make sure that your cookies are completely cooled before starting.
17. Transfer icing to a piping bag fitted with a #2 round tip and pipe frosting on all cookies.
18. This Easy Royal Icing usually sets in about 2 hours at room temperature, depending on the temperature and humidity. If you're layering royal icing onto cookies for specific designs and need it to set quickly, place cookies in front of a fan heater (set on low heat), box fan or oscillating fan to help speed it up – you’ll need at least 1 hour between layers. Letting your decorated cookies dry in front of a fan will also increase the “sheen” or “shine” of the frosting, rather than a flat matte finish if dried slower only at room temperature.
19. Allow cookies to dry uncovered for at least 6-8 hours before next step.
20. **SPECKLE COOKIES**: To speckle, place the dried frosted cookies on a large sheet of parchment paper. Using your finger or a very small spoon, mix together the pure vanilla extract, chocolate extract and cocoa powder in a small bowl. It's best to have a glove handy so you don't dye your fingertip brown.
21. Dip a small paintbrush in the food coloring/water and flick the mixture onto the cookies using one of your fingertips. Rotate the direction of your finger to make sure you get all of the cookies evenly. Have fun with this - and try not to make a huge mess!
22. For best results, allow speckled frosting to set and dry **24-HOURS** before storing – keep parchment paper between each layer.

**YIELD**: Makes about 27 (three-inch) cookies (or 20 4-inch cookies)

**RECIPE NOTES**:

* **COCOA POWDER**: For this recipe you can use either Dutch-processed or natural cocoa powder. Dutch-processed cocoa powder is typically paired with baking powder, but either works for this cookie recipe. Always use the best quality baking cocoa for the best results!
* **MALTED MILK POWDER**: For this recipe I recommend Nestle Carnation Malted Milk Powder. If you aren’t able to find malted milk powder, you can substitute a 5-ounce box of malted milk balls, crushed fine.
* **SIFTING:** Sifting the flour and cocoa powder together is imperative to ensure the two are perfectly blended and aerated, and eliminates any lumps!
* **SOFT & CHEWY COOKIES**: These cookies will stay fresh in an air-tight container at room temperature for up to 3 days or in the refrigerator for up to 1 week.
* **FOR THE BEST CHOCOLATE SUGAR COOKIES**: I recommend sprinkling cocoa powder on your work surface and rolling pin for rolling out the cookie dough, rather than flour. You may also find it helpful to dip your cookie cutters in cocoa powder between cutting cookies out. Cocoa powder added extra chocolate flavor and chocolate color to these cookies (regular flour may make your cookies bake up with a white surface).
* **MAKE AHEAD TIP:**  Plain baked chocolate sugar cookies freeze well up to 1 month. Thaw overnight in the refrigerator before decorating.
* **TO KEEP THESE COOKIES SOFT**: These cookies will stay soft and fresh in an air-tight container at room temperature for up to one week. You can also pop some large fresh marshmallows in the container to keep the cookies soft – replace every day or so, as soon as the marshmallows dry out and harden. It’s a sweet little trick!
* **MAKE AHEAD TIP:**  Plain baked cookies freeze well up to 1 month. Thaw overnight UNOPENED on your kitchen countertop before decorating.
* **FOR PARTIES:**  I package cookies individually in self-sealing clear cellophane cello bags (Pack It Chic are my favorite brand).  Make sure cookies are completely dry after decorating before packaging.  To make ahead, place individually wrapped and sealed cookies in a larger airtight container and freeze.  Thaw on your countertop before serving - do not thaw in refrigerator (you are trying to minimize moisture during defrosting, which can cause your frosting designs to run or bleed).

*Original recipe created by Snowflakes & Coffeecakes; published April 2022..*

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