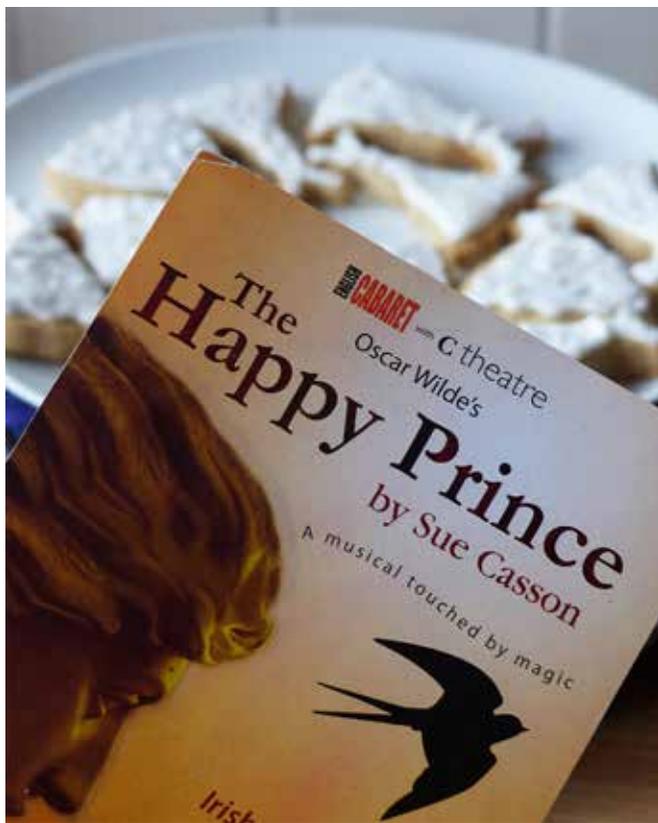


Seamstress' Biscuit Ballgowns

Inspired by The Happy Prince



About the show

Inspired by The Happy Prince, I have come up with a recipe for Seamstress' Biscuit Ballgowns - double ginger biscuits iced with stem ginger royal icing that would be the perfect gift for any aspiring belle of the ball. Based on Oscar Wilde's short story, Sue Casson's The Happy Prince tells the story of how a statue prince and a migrating swallow work together to redeem the poverty of a city. The swallow carries the prince's jewels to the poorest within the city walls including a seamstress, a writer in need of inspiration and a newspaper seller. Told by a cast of 4, the story is brought to life with narration from the all powerful storyteller, Chorus and aspiring assistant, Pandora, keen to learn the tricks of the theatrical trade. The Seamstress is sung by Pandora, playing a single mother seamstress in the city, who dreams of visiting the balls for which she sews the gowns.

Notes on the recipe

This biscuit recipe is very adaptable so you can play around with different flavours if you fancy a change. And of course, you can choose different cutter shapes and create other shapes of biscuit. In this recipe, I have used Royal Icing Sugar, which is icing sugar with added egg white or meringue powder and you can buy it in major supermarkets. This makes the recipe one step easier but of course you are welcome to find a recipe for royal icing and make it from scratch if you prefer. Dusting the set finished icing with glitter adds a final touch!



Ingredients

For the biscuits

500g plain flour

225g salted butter, softened

75g granulated sugar

75g demerara sugar

1 large egg

A pinch of salt

3 tsps. ground ginger

3 balls of stem ginger, finely chopped

For the icing

500g Royal Icing Sugar

60ml cold water

20ml stem ginger syrup (from the jar)

Edible glitter, to decorate, (optional)

Equipment

Big mixing bowls

A Sieve

A wooden spoon

A sharp knife

Cling film

2 baking trays, lined with greaseproof paper

A fish slice

A rolling pin

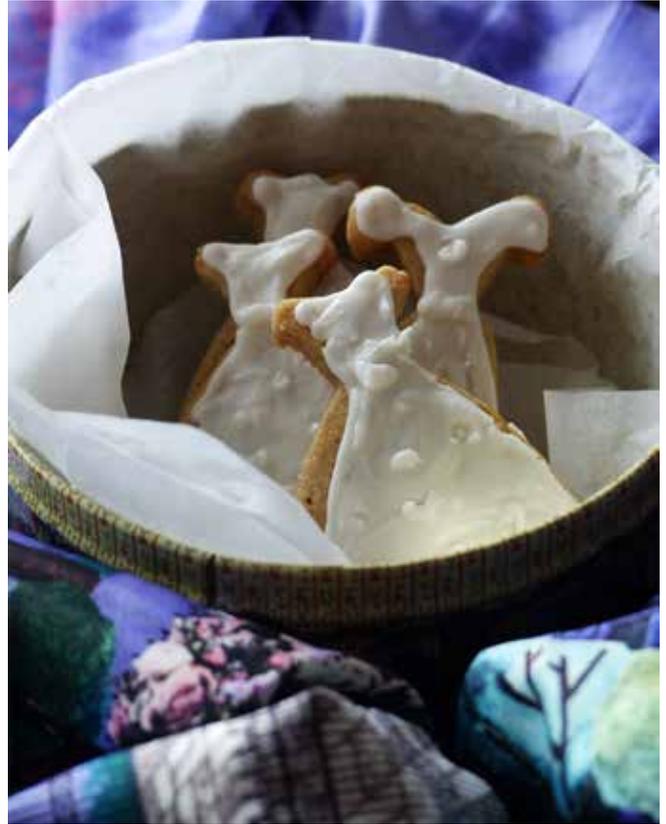
Dress shaped cookie cutter

A balloon whisk

Skewers, optional

Disposable piping bags, and a small and large round nozzle

A pastry brush



How to make the bake

1. Start by making the biscuit dough. Sieve the flour into a mixing bowl and set aside for later. In a separate mixing bowl, cream together the softened butter, salt and sugars until light and fluffy. (ESB Top Tip : The mixed sugars make this a little more tricky but the lighter the mix is, the lighter the finished biscuit will be!) Beat the egg roughly and add to the mix in two stages. Mix well with a wooden spoon between each addition until it is completely incorporated and the consistency is sandy. Finally, add in the ground ginger and finely chopped stem ginger and give it a final stir.

2. Divide the mixture into two and take one half of the dough and bring together with your hands. (ESB Top Tip : Don't be afraid to bring the dough together roughly as the more you work the dough, the more it will come together and won't affect the texture of the finished biscuit!) Shape into a ball and then flatten with your palm to make a rough disc of dough and wrap in cling film. Repeat with the second half of the dough mix and then put the discs of dough into the fridge for 30 minutes to chill. (ESB Top Tip : This makes the dough easier to roll out and makes the edges of the biscuits sharper!)

3. Preheat the oven to 180°C and line two baking trays with greaseproof paper. Take one disc of dough out of the fridge. To roll out the dough without adding excess flour, place one sheet of cling film over a clean surface and place the disc of dough on top. Then take a second sheet of cling film and roll out the dough between the two sheets of cling film like a dough sandwich. Roll out to about 1/4 inch thick or until it looks like it's going to crack to pieces, remembering to move the dough on the cling film surface from time to time to stop it from sticking. Then cut out the dress shapes from the dough with the dress cookie cutters and carefully transfer to the prepared trays. (ESB Top Tip : The biscuits don't spread much during baking so don't worry about putting them too close together!) When you have rolled out the cookies, bake for 10 - 12 minutes in the preheated oven until they are starting to turn golden around the edge and are dry to the touch.

4. Repeat step 3 with the remaining dough and continue rolling and cutting with the second disc until you have baked all the biscuits. Then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely before you begin to decorate them.



5. To make up the royal icing, sieve the icing sugar into a mixing bowl and make a well in the centre. Mix together the water and syrup in a jug and then pour into the middle of the icing sugar. Use the whisk to gently mix the sugar and water mix together then beat until soft peaks form (up to 5 minutes.) Divide the icing into two, and to one half, add 2 tps. of water to loosen the mix and make a flood consistency. (ESB Top Tip : When decorating biscuits with royal icing, you need two textures of icing - one to line the border of the biscuit and the other to fill in the centre of the border. Flooding consistency icing is slightly looser than the border icing to make it flood the area smoothly.) Put the icing into two disposable icing bags fitted with a small and medium tip ready to ice.

6. To decorate the biscuits, take one biscuit at a time and ice around the edge of the biscuit with the stiffer border icing in the piping bag with the small tip. Then fill in the shape you have bordered with the flood icing. To even out and fill in the shape properly, use a skewer to gently coax the icing into the outline border. Continue to ice all the biscuits before leaving the icing to set for up to 2 hours. To add the final touch, decorate further with extra dots or stripes of icing and when the icing has completely cooled, use a pastry brush to dust with a very small amount of silver edible glitter. The perfect bake for any aspiring belle of the ball!