



Royal Icing

½ oz powdered egg white/ dried albumen

3oz cold Water

} Mix well together and leave for ½ hour

1lb sieved icing sugar

OR

3oz egg white (lightly beaten) Approx 3 medium eggs.

} *Most people steer clear of fresh eggs now.*

1lb sieved icing sugar

5-7 drops lemon juice or 4-5 drops white vinegar

ENSURE ALL EQUIPMENT USED IS CLEAN AND GREASE FREE

Reconstitute the albumen. Pure albumen goes very lumpy when your first mix it with water. It takes time for the powder to dissolve completely. Give it an occasional stir. Do not use it until all the lumps have gone. The lumps are the egg white, straining the lumps away will result in a weak royal icing. If using fresh eggs, separate egg white. Do not allow any yolk to enter the bowl as this will prevent aeration and result in heavy icing.

Method using a food mixer: Put egg white or solution into mixing bowl, add ½ of icing sugar and remainder gradually. Use beater attachment (K Beater on Kenwood) and beat on slowest speed for 10-20 minutes until peak is formed. Keep bowl covered with cling film and a damp cloth. Airtight when finished for the day. No need to refrigerate. Bear in mind if leaving under a damp cloth for a long time it will make the royal icing more fluid, as it absorbs the moisture through the cling film as it is breathable.

Method using a hand mixer: Beat egg white/albumen with 2/3 icing sugar until white and thick, add remaining icing with lemon juice/white vinegar if using fresh egg white, and beat to soft peak. Keeps it white and adds strength. It will be ready quicker but rest for a while before using.

Method by hand: Put egg white or solution into mixing bowl, add ½ of icing sugar and beat until colour changes, it becomes whiter. Add the remainder and beat until peak is formed. It will take around 20mins to an hour with it resting.

When coating a cake add 1 tsp of glycerine to 1lb of icing after it has been brought to peak. This makes the icing softer and easier to cake. Try to make a sufficient amount for the whole cake as if you make more fresh icing and the glycerine % is off, it may cause the dried royal icing to flake when cut. (Like slate shards.)

Equipment List for Royal icing

PIPING NOZZLES/TUBES

For adding decorative touches, finishing cake edges, tops and corners.

STRAIGHT EDGED RULER

To obtain smooth finish to cake top

SIDESCRAPE

To obtain smooth or patterned side design

TURNTABLE

A must have, especially when using royal icing. Easily moves a weighty cake and allows even coverage and piping on cake

PALETTE KNIVES (sml & lge)

To apply royal icing to the cake, filling icing bags, mixing colours, removal of excess sugarpaste, etc.

Marzipanning a cake to royal ice: For best results make sure the cake is marzipaned a minimum of a week ahead. Natural colour marzipan to golden is preferential. Fill all of the little holes, cracks etc with small balls of marzipan and make sure smooth. If you start with a good foundation then this will help with the end result. Use slightly warmed smooth apricot jam and brush over the entire cake. Remove any spillage off the board. The sides and top should be marzipaned separately so it leaves a sharp top edge. Cover the top first and ensure the marzipan goes to the very edge. (Measure prior to brushing with jam.) Smooth with cake smoother. Then cut out either one long strip to go around a round cake or cut out 4 sides to cover cake. Do two opposite sides and then the remaining two.



Icing a cake: When icing a cake use full peak icing for the first coat, this will ensure the colour of the marzipan is covered. If covering a dummy start with soft peak. After the first coat do not re-beat icing again - just stir through, otherwise you will re-introduce air bubbles. Each coat of icing should have a softer consistency than the previous layer. The icing will naturally go softer over the few days you will be covering the cake. The final coat should be similar to single cream.

When coating a cake top or the sides of a round cake, turn cake by a quarter turn for each layer. That way you will not get a noticeable start point. For square/hexagon cakes do alternate sides at the same time - if you do adjacent sides you won't get a clean finish and it will change shape. Do not attempt any top/side coat until the previous one has dried - approx 2 hours to work on an adjacent piece (top or sides) or 4 hours to work on the same piece.

Before starting a new layer using small palette knife remove any lumpy bits from the cake and board. If the board is not kept clean you will not get a smooth coating, so keep the board clean. Too soft a consistency will result in a poor/dull finish.

Left over royal icing - make some Pastillage:

You could make some plaques to dry out to use on a cake or even a buttercreamed cake as it will stay firmer longer.

Recipes: 2tsp CMC/Tylose & 260g (9oz) stiff peak royal icing.

Work both ingredients together and it will start to thicken immediately. Knead on work surface sprinkled with a tiny amount of icing sugar until it forms a dough. Keep adding icing sugar [if it is sticky] until it is smooth and crack free. Use immediately or store in an airtight container and refrigerate or freeze until needed. Ensure you bring it back to room temp before using.

OR

1 egg white, 1 cup of icing sugar (sifted-weigh after sifting) and 2 teaspoons of CMC/Tylose. Very stretchy and rolls really thin-just give it time to "rest" so that the gum can "activate".

If the paste feels a little tight then just add a little white fat to get it going. We suggest that it is made several hours before you need it to allow the gum to start to work, overnight is best.

Recipe for Sugar Glue

Boil three tablespoons of water and a walnut sized piece of sugarpaste together for one and a half minutes until paste dissolved. Store in a jar when cold, no need to keep in fridge. Used for sticking sugarpaste to sugarpaste if water is not working for you. Used with frills, overlays, smocking etc.

OR Add slightly cooled boiling water to a small jar (2" in height) and add a 1/5 of a teaspoon of CMC/Tylose. It will go lumpy - give it a good stir and leave to 30mins. Stir again and if not totally clear leave in 30 min gaps re stirring until clear. It is then ready to use.

Overleaf :

Pointers and Pitfalls and Identifying Royal Icing Problems



Royal Icing Pointers & Pitfalls

Always ensure all your equipment is grease free. Icing contaminated with grease may appear grey or yellowish, it may feel heavy and not take up the air. It may not come up to full peak or may not remain at full peak once it is beaten. It will fail to hold its piped shape and will not set. If possible keep a separate bowl for mixing royal icing and nothing else.

Sieve your icing sugar before mixing to ensure there are no lumps in the mixture. Do not push lumps at the bottom of your sieve into your bowl of royal icing. These tiny lumps are ripe for blocking your tube.

Always beat royal icing until it reaches full peak, regardless of the consistency required. Only after it has been fully beaten should it be let it down for run-outs etc.

If your icing feels slack do not stiffen with extra icing sugar, instead incorporate more air in order not to upset the recipe.

Keep your royal icing covered at all times as being in contact with the air will cause the icing to dry out. Clear down the edges of your container before covering the royal icing with cling film and then replacing the lid. This should prevent the formation of dry crusty particles that may fall into your icing and either block your nozzle or cause lines in your royal iced cake.

If you are using lots of small bags of icing put the cling film as mentioned above but cover the top of the bowl with a damp tea towel to stop it drying out.

To prevent your royal icing from setting too hard add glycerine. This should only ever be used in icing to coat a cake and **never** used in piping or run outs. Glycerine is humectant and attracts humidity from the atmosphere thereby keeping your royal icing soft and pleasant to eat.

Do not fill the bags any more than $\frac{3}{4}$ full as it will squeeze out of the sides. Always buy the best quality nozzle you can afford it will keep its shape and help you with a better end result.

Royal icing made correctly should dissolve on eating, remember it is basically a meringue mixture and should have the eating qualities of one.

If you still have icing in your tube after 30 minutes, empty the tube and nozzle and re beat the icing before filling a new icing bag. After this time the icing starts to harden in the bag and is so much harder to pipe with.

If it starts to become difficult to push the icing out, STOP replace the bag. There is nothing worse than a burst bag of icing coloured or not over your work.

If you have a lot of piping to do it may be worth filling at least two of each colour ready to change over if there is a problem or your bag gets to warm.

If making coloured icing to cover e.g. a three tiered wedding cake ensure you make the whole amount of icing required for all three cakes and their boards in one go. This way they will all be the same colour. Make a note of what colour was used for which cake as a reference in case you need to repeat. Consider counting the amount of drops of colour added to replicate later too.

Most common mistakes are failing to beat the icing long enough, or adding water to let down the consistency too quickly when it just needed more beating.

Original thoughts re Eggs storage: if using for royal icing they should be kept in the fridge, however for baking the eggs should be out of the fridge the night before to keep a light finish. Always buy eggs with the lion mark. CHECK with your EHO as to their requirements re eggs as they vary from town to town!



Royal Icing Problems

- Crust formed on top** - If left uncovered or not in an airtight container or the cloth has become dry or left uncovered with. Do Not Use.
- Icing has Separated** - Icing has stood too long. Re-beat until the right consistency is reached.
- If too wet, a cloth may have been in contact with icing, no cling-film used.
- Looks like Marshmallow** - Normally over beaten, usually with a mixer.
- Icing looks Yellow** - Not beaten enough and/or sugar added too fast.
- Icing looks Grey** - Aluminium bowl used. Glass bowls are best for royal icing.
- Icing will not set** - Run-outs - Atmosphere too damp
- Glycerine add to icing eg: too much colour added.
- Coating too Hard to Cut** - Insufficient glycerine added to royal icing to keep it soft.
- Nozzles/tubes Blocked** - Damp or lumpy icing sugar used, crust has been stirred in.
- Egg white not dissolved properly.
- Pieces of a plastic bowl in icing.

Piping Problems

Icing breaking when piping

Too much air in icing, over beaten, leave for 24 hours, stir slowly to knock out some of the air.

Piping tube is being moved too quickly.

Not enough pressure on the icing bag.

Jerky or uneven movements.

Icing is wrong consistency for the size of the tube.

Icing is being lifted too high above surface.

Icing line is not straight

Piping tube is too close or touches the surface.

Icing is coming out of the tube too fast, use less pressure, or move slightly faster, check consistency is correct.

Icing is being stretched as it is piped.

Unsteady hand: Hold bag in writing hand and support with forefinger of the other hand or rest arm on a support of a convenient height.

Bulb of icing at the start of a line

Tube not lifted from surface as soon as icing is attached.

Icing already out of the end of the tube before it touches the surface.

This can sometimes be removed with a damp paintbrush.

Bulb of icing at the end of a line

Pressure must be removed from the bag before the line is put down on the surface.

Consistencies

Piping for 1.5 nozzle/tube - should be a soft peak, when a small peak is taken up on a knife it should stand up not flop over.

Piping for Stars and shells - a large peak should stand up, and the icing will look drier.

Run-outs - use piping consistency for outline, and then the run-out icing should flatten out within a count of ten. Meri-White icing should always be softened with Meri-White dissolved in water as for icing.

Semi Slack - used for Run-outs without an outline should flatten out when moved but is stiffer than run-out icing.

Coating a cake - use firm peak, can be softened with glycerine. Each coat of icing should have a softer consistency than the previous layer. The final coat should be similar to single cream.