

# Italian Butter Sweets

## Ingredients:

1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature

2/3 cup sugar

2 large egg yolks

1 ½ teaspoons pure vanilla extract

½ teaspoon salt

2 cups all-purpose flour

6 ounces good semi-sweet chocolate, melted

1 cup festive sprinkles, chopped nuts or finely shredded coconut

## Optional fillings:

Jam, Nutella, ganache, citrus curd, buttercream

## Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees and line two baking sheets with parchment paper.

Use a stand or handheld mixer to cream the butter and sugar together on medium-high speed (setting 6 on my KitchenAid) until light and fluffy, about 4 to 5 minutes. Add the vanilla and salt and mix on medium for 15 seconds.

Add the egg yolks and beat on medium until combined, about 30 seconds. Scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl, then add the flour and mix on low speed just until combined – do not overmix.

This dough is somewhat stiff, and if it is too stiff for you to handle well, you can add a little bit of milk, starting with ½ teaspoon and not more than 2 teaspoons.

Fit a piping bag with a large open-star piping tip (I use Wilton 8b or Ateco 828 most often). Fill the bag half-way with the dough, squeezing it all the way toward the tip to remove any air pockets. Too much dough may cause the bag to break, so be careful not to overfill.

Pipe the dough onto the baking sheets, in pieces about ½-inch wide and 1 ½ to 2 inches long (I prefer shorter, especially if adding filling), leaving a 1-inch space between each cookie. For a

clean finish, you can use a knife or scissors to cut the dough for each cookie, or rub a little water on the end, but I just let the melted chocolate cover any imperfections.

Bake the cookies until they are golden at the edges, about 11 to 14 minutes, depending on your oven and how golden you like your cookies. Remove from the oven and let the cookies cool on the baking sheet for 15 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.

### **To assemble:**

Line a baking sheet with wax paper.

For best result, use a small bowl with raised sides for the melted chocolate and sprinkles, like a ramekin or Pyrex prep bowl.

If making sandwich cookies, add the filling before dipping. Pipe or spread a little of the filling down the center of one cookie, then top with another cookie.

Dip the top third of each cookie in the melted chocolate, scraping off any excess along the rim of the bowl. Press the dipped end into the sprinkles and place the cookie on the wax paper. When all the cookies are done, they can be refrigerated for about 10 minutes to set the chocolate.

### **To store:**

Keep the cookies (plain or dipped) in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 1 week, or in the freezer for several months. If frozen, remove the cookies from the container before thawing, to prevent condensation. Cookies with filling should be refrigerated.

### **Sarah's Tips:**

- Room temperature ingredients are key to creating the tender crumb of these cookies.
- The cookie dough can be made ahead of time and stored in the freezer (several months) or refrigerator (one week); however, it must be warmed to room temperature before piping, or it will not pipe.