

# MOM'S ITALIAN CHRISTMAS COOKIES

Makes about 4 dozen

By Dennis W. Viau; modified from my mother's recipe.

My mother's Italian Christmas cookies were like rocks after a few days. We weren't allowed to throw them in the house. I never wanted to learn how to make them until it dawned on me one day that my Italian grandmother, from whom my mother learned to make her cookies, lived through the Great Depression. She was notorious for cutting corners. Butter is expensive, water is cheap. Substitute. With that in mind, I set about to correct my mother's Italian Christmas cookie recipe.



## Ingredients:

### For the Cookies:

4½ cups (22 ounces/624g) all-purpose flour; sifted  
¾ cup (6 oz./170g) butter; room temperature  
½ cup (3½ oz./100g) sugar  
½ teaspoon salt  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
4 large eggs  
½ cup (120ml) heavy cream  
2 teaspoons anise extract (or almond flavoring)

### For the Icing:

1½ cup (170g) confectioners' sugar  
1 tablespoon light corn syrup  
1 tablespoon water (or juice, such as lemon juice), more if needed  
Nonpareils or other decorative sprinkles

## Directions:

In a large bowl combine the flour and the butter, cutting it together with a wire pastry blender or fork (known as "cutting in" the fat). Then combine the mixture, using your hands to push together the two ingredients until completely blended. Be careful not to melt the butter with your warm hands, which would make the dough oily. Add the sugar, salt, and baking powder and mix well using the pastry blender.

In a smaller bowl combine the eggs and heavy cream. Mix well. Add the extract and combine. Pour the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients and combine until mixed together. Let stand about 5 minutes and then knead lightly until smooth (about a minute).

Using small amounts of dough, roll little ropes and twist to create different shapes. Place on greased baking sheets (or lined with parchment paper). See the video ([youtu.be/cAZ7FrRFNj4](https://youtu.be/cAZ7FrRFNj4)) for some shapes we created as children, as well as some new ones I thought of while preparing this recipe. Be creative.

Heat the oven to 375°F (190°C). Bake 15 minutes, only until cooked through but not browned. Arrange on a wire rack to cool. Combine the icing ingredients, but not the nonpareils, and mix until smooth.

Decorate with frosting and colored nonpareils (or other colored sprinkles). Store in sealed containers.

The step-by-step photos were removed. See the video for the preparation.

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