

Bake Candy Cane Cookies!

Your child can make a fun alternative to candy just in time for the holidays as a special gift for friends or family—or just to enjoy on a cold afternoon with a nice glass of milk! Your child can get creative with cookie dough and food coloring. Rolling and twisting her own baked candy canes into shape will encourage her to use her hands and will tempt her taste buds!



What you need:

- Tube of pre-made sugar cookie dough
- Red food coloring
- Peppermint extract
- Measuring spoons
- Flour
- Baking tray
- Parchment paper

What you do:

1. Preheat the oven as directed on the package of cookie dough.
2. Invite your child to help cut the loaf of store bought cookie dough in half using a serrated knife. She should put half the dough in one bowl, and the other half in a second bowl.
3. Now she can measure $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of red food coloring and add it to one bowl of cookie dough. Offer your child a spoon and really encourage her to stir the dough incorporating the food coloring and giving the muscles in her hands a good workout!
4. Now she can add $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of peppermint extract to the uncolored cookie dough and really give it a stir!
5. Place the cookie dough in the fridge for at least 30 minutes to chill. (Colder dough is easier to roll.)
6. Once the cookie dough has had some time to rest and get chilly in the fridge, invite your child to wash her hands and lightly dust a work surface with flour.
7. Now she can scoop a small spoonful of the red cookie dough and roll it into a six to seven inch long snake.
8. Now she can do the same with a spoonful of the peppermint-flavored dough so she has two rolled "snakes" of the same size and length.
9. Help her to pinch the lengths together at one end and twist the dough together creating the signature candy cane stripes.
10. Invite her to gently transfer the twisted length of dough onto a baking tray covered in parchment paper and then form it into a candy cane shape by hooking the top.
11. She can continue rolling, twisting and forming the cookie dough until the tray is filled. Bake according to the package directions.

Did you know: The first reference to candy canes dates back more than 350 years ago! One story goes that European candy makers created curved lengths of sugar sticks that could then be hung on Christmas trees, which eventually evolved into the candy canes we know and love today!