

Sculpting an Owl in Pastillage

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Variedades Dalila's Pastillage Dough Recipe (900 Gr.)

Ingredients:

- 1½ pounds of sifted icing confectioners' sugar (800 gr.)
- 6 tablespoons of cold water** (total 90 cc)
- 2 tablespoons of unflavored gelatin (15 ml)
- 1 tablespoon of glucose (between 32 and 35 grams total)
- 1 teaspoon of CMC (5 ml)
- 1 cc of flavoring to taste
- 10 drops of Citric Acid or lemon juice

** For water, use a tablespoon. You can also use a scale (90 grams) or a syringe (90 cc).

Preparation:

To make the syrup place the water in a small sauce pan and then sprinkle the unflavored gelatin slowly over the water. Let it sit and hydrate until it is very thick.

In a bowl, place the sifted powdered sugar, add the CMC and stir well. Put about a third of the sugar mixture on the working area of the table to knead into the dough later.

Place the sauce pan with the gelatin over medium heat until the gelatin dissolves and liquefies, DO NOT let it boil. Remove from heat and add the glucose, then simmer again, mixing until everything blends well. Remove from heat.

Make a well in the sugar mixture in the bowl and pour the syrup into it. Start mixing in the sugar from the outside in. As you mix in sugar add the citric acid and continue mixing, then add the flavoring and continue mixing to dissolve any lumps. Continue to mix in sugar until a dough ball forms.

Remove the dough and any left over sugar from bowl and place in the sugar on the work area. Continue kneading until all the sugar is incorporated and dough is smooth, without lumps.

Store pastillage dough at room temperature in a transparent plastic bag that has all the air pressed out of it and is tightly sealed.

Tips:

- It will keep for approximately 20 days, if well sealed.
- Make sure to have molds and cutters prepared and ready before rolling out the dough so that it does not have time to dry out.

Materials:

- 1 cake, 7 inches x 3 or 4 inches
- 1 cake, 10 inches x 2 inches
- Serrated knife
- Brushes for dusting
- Buttercream
- Fondant
- Pastillage dough
- Ivory, yellow, black, green and pink colors
- Rose petal cutters of all sizes
- Small blossom cutters
- Leaf cutters and veiners
- Airbrush
- Brown airbrush color
- Petal dust: brown, yellow, black, orange, green
- Feather markers
- Edible glue
- 1 Styrofoam™ ball – 3 inch diameter

- In the event of a crust forming on the Pastillage, due to air getting into the bag, remove the crust by scraping or cutting then knead the dough. DO NOT knead the crusty bits into the dough.
- Always knead the paste with confectionary sugar.

Instructions:

Step 1: Cover a 10 inch round base cake with ivory fondant. Mark sides of cake in a wood grain and the top with “rings” like a tree stump. Use airbrush and brown color to shade the stump and set aside to dry.



Step 2: Carve the 7 inch cake into an oval owl shaped body, notice the flat bottom (use a cardboard base) and that the front of the owl is rounded at the bottom and gets smaller as it goes up. Then cover with ivory colored fondant. For the head I used a Styrofoam™ ball covered in fondant and attached to the body with wooden skewers. The head may be made of carved cake, if desired. If cake is used, remember to use supports in the body.



Step 3: To make the owl wings, roll out ivory colored pastillage dough and cut two large teardrops using a large rose petal cutter. Make a diagonal cut across the large end of the teardrops to make the wing shaped bases. Turn wings so that you have a left and a right wing. Glue two toothpicks to the diagonal cut edges. These will be used to attach the wings to the body.



Step 4: Start making the feathers using a feather marker. Mix some pastillage with fondant paste and roll out very thin. Press on the feather marker and with a sharp knife trim the excess from the sides.



Glue feathers to the wings starting at the pointed end with longer feathers and then work to the wide end with the feathers getting shorter. Use little bits of tissue to give the feathers movement. Allow to dry, turn over and repeat for the backs of the wings.



Step 5: Once dry remove tissue and airbrush with brown color on both sides. While the wings dry, use the time to shade the base of the body with the airbrush; then insert wings into the owl body, one on each side.

Step 6: The feathers on the body are applied from the bottom up to the neck, both front and back. They are made using thinly rolled pastillage/fondant mixture and a rose petal cutter. Once cut out, vein them on the feather marker. Dust and shade them with petal dust, glue them to the body in overlapping rows. Remember to give them a little movement.



Step 7: When you reach the head, use a smaller rose petal cutter and make them as you did for the body. Cover the head with feathers, leaving the center of the face. The feathers on the back of the head will come up over the top and down to the top of the open space. At the top of the head add two small “ears” that stand up and out from the head.



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Step 8: To make the owl's face, roll two thin sausages making the ends of each smaller. Attach them in a circle with the smaller ends meeting between where the eyes will go. The hole in the middle should be large enough for the eyes. Next cut two large rose petals and add the feather details with a Dresden veining tool. Attach them to face pressing in where the eyes will go. Airbrush the outer edges of the face and the feathers on the top of the head with brown color. When dry use brown and black petal dust to finish the shading.



Step 9: To finish the face, you will need to make two eyes from yellow paste. Add circles of thin black paste for the pupils. Use small thin pieces of brown dusted paste for the eyelids and very thinly rolled black paste to go around the bottom of the eyes and across the edge of the eyelids, attaching with edible glue. For the beak, use a teardrop shape of black paste, and make a cut on the small end of the teardrop to open the beak (the bottom of the beak should be smaller than the top). Add a small thin piece of ivory fondant inside the bottom part of the beak and attach to face.



Step 10: For feet, use two flattened teardrop shape pieces of ivory paste. Make two cuts in the wide area of the teardrop, separating into three toes. Use the veining tool to mark then dust with



yellow and orange petal dust. Curve them to the talon shape and let them dry. Roll eight tiny pointed teardrops for the claws and attach them to the talons and on each heel. Allow to dry.



Step 11: Place and secure the owl cake to the base cake. Then attach the feet with edible glue or royal icing.

Step 12: The finishing details on this piece are the two-toned flowers with green dusted centers and green paste leaves that are dusted with petal dust. There is also a toadstool and multi-colored rocks.



About the Sugar Artist: Dalila Cabrera de Peña is a Venezuelan, award winning sugar artist, instructor and judge. She has taught and demonstrated at many ICES Conventions, in Nigeria, Panama, Argentina, Puerto Rico and Ecuador. She has studied sugar craft at the renowned Wilton Sugarcraft School in Chicago, IL, at the International Sugar Art Collection (ISAC) in Atlanta, GA with Nicholas Lodge, and completed the PME Master Course. Her work has graced the pages of several international magazines. Dalila holds two gold medals from Cake International Competition in Birmingham, England. She also hosts, annually, the largest sugar craft fair in Venezuela called "Expo Tortas", and is currently serving as the ICES Representative for Venezuela.

