

Jelly Cookies (Filigree cookies, from The Book of Cookies)

1/2 cup butter, softened
1/4 cup sugar
1 egg, beaten
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
3 tablespoons cornstarch
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
pinch of salt
1-3 tablespoons milk, if necessary

2 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
1/3 cup powdered sugar, sifted
a few drops vanilla extract

sifted powdered sugar for sprinkling

1 tablespoon each of 3 (or more) jams (raspberry and/or blackberry preserves, lime marmelade, apricot jam, lemon curd, etc.), sieved**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease several baking sheets with butter. In a medium-size bowl, beat butter with sugar until creamy; gradually beat in egg, then vanilla. Sift dry ingredients into bowl; blend in with a spoon, then mix with your hand to form a soft dough (add a splash or two of milk if dough seems too dry).

Roll out dough on a floured surface to 1/8-inch thickness. Using a large (at least 3-inch diameter) cookie cutter, cut out shapes from dough; place on prepared cookie sheets. Using a shaped aspic cutter or small cookie cutter, cut a pattern of small shapes in half of the cookies (there should be one cut-out for each flavor of jam). Knead and roll out trimmings; cut out more shapes. Half the cookies should be solid; half should be cut-outs.

Bake 13 minutes or until lightly brown. Cool on wire racks. To make filling, beat butter with powdered sugar and vanilla until creamy. To assemble the cookies, spread the bottoms of the solid cookies with the filling and top with a cut-out cookie. Sprinkle lightly with powdered sugar before preparing jams. Place each jam in a separate small paper piping bag. Cut a small hole in bottom of each. Pipe a different jam into the cut-out portions of each cookie. Makes about 18 cookies.

Easter Eggs: cut a single, yolk-sized hole and use a yellow or orange jam

**Sieving the jams eliminates seeds and pulp and makes the jam easier to dispense. Place the jam in a small mesh sieve and, using the back of a spoon, force the jam through the sieve onto squares of plastic wrap. You can then use the plastic wrap for the piping process: twist the wrap up so that the jam is collected into the bottom. Poke a hole in the bottom with a toothpick and, using gentle pressure, pipe the jam into the cookies.