

Custard Creams

Be very careful of anything the Weasley twins offer you to eat. Neville has just eaten a custard cream, seemingly harmless and probably quite tasty, but it turns him into a canary (see *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, Chapter 21).

If you've been wondering what in the world custard creams are, the mystery has been solved. They are nothing more than sandwich cookies, typically flavored with custard powder, which is similar to vanilla pudding mix.

Cookie Dough

2¼ cups all-purpose flour
½ cup vanilla pudding mix (1 packet, not instant)
1½ teaspoons baking powder
¼ teaspoon salt
1 stick (8 tablespoons) butter, at room temperature
1 cup confectioners' sugar
1 large egg, at room temperature
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
¼ cup whole milk, at room temperature

Filling

1¼ cups confectioners' sugar
¼ stick (2 tablespoons) butter, at room temperature
½ teaspoon pure vanilla extract
Bowl of sugar, for flattening cookies

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(continued)

1. Set the oven racks to the upper and lower positions, preheat the oven to 350°F, and line two cookie sheets with parchment paper. Whisk together the flour, vanilla pudding mix, baking powder, and salt in a mixing bowl and set aside.
2. In a separate bowl, cream the butter and confectioners' sugar with an electric mixer until light and fluffy, scraping down the sides of the bowl as needed, about 5 minutes. Add the egg and vanilla and beat until combined. Add the flour mixture and stir until the mixture is crumbly. Add the milk and stir until the mixture forms a dough. Break off small pieces, roll into balls (about 1 inch), and place them on the cookie sheets 1½ inches apart.
3. Oil the bottom of a glass and dip it into the bowl of sugar to coat. Press the glass down on the balls of dough, dipping it in the sugar between each cookie. Bake for 16 minutes, until the cookies are just beginning to brown a bit at the edges, rotating the cookie sheets and switching shelves halfway through baking. Cool on the cookie sheets for 5 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.
4. Beat the filling ingredients together until creamy. If the mixture is too dry, add milk 1 tablespoon at a time until it becomes spreadable. Sandwich the cooled cookies with about 1 teaspoon of the filling.

Makes 2 dozen