



Kitchen Cheat Sheet: Sugar Cone Christmas Trees

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Tips and Time Savers

- Pour the powdered sugar through a sifter or sieve to remove any clumps. This step isn't necessary, but it makes a really smooth icing.
- Your egg whites must be at room temperature in order for them to whip up properly! Let 'em sit out for an hour or so before you get started.
- Add less green food coloring to your white frosting for a light green tree, or add extra drops to make a dark pine color.
- Using a star tip or leaf tip on your piping bag will make your Christmas tree cones look more realistic with a leaf-like pattern.
- Start icing your sugar cones from the rim of the cone and move upwards in vertical rows all the way up to the top of the cone, repeating this process until you cover the whole thing with green frosting. This technique will keep the tree shape neat and consistent.
- Don't forget to place a star-shaped sprinkle on top of the sugar cone!
- Serve your sugar cone Christmas trees on a rimmed cookie sheet to prevent them from sliding off the edges during transport.
- Make sure to thoroughly wipe your stand mixer or large bowl with lemon juice/white vinegar to remove any oily residue. This is key to achieving the desired consistency of icing since oil ruins its texture.

Variations

- If you're low on time, grab tubs of store-bought frosting at your local grocery store instead of making the green icing from scratch. Beware, one reason I use royal icing is that it hardens. The kind from the store stays soft and gets on everything.
- You can use either sugar cones or waffle cones—just make sure it's a flat-top cone. Otherwise, your Christmas trees will tip over!
- Ditch store-bought snickerdoodles and make your own. Find my easy old-fashioned snickerdoodle cookie recipe later in this post.
- You can skip the cookie base if you want. Instead, build your Christmas tree sugar cones on a small piece of parchment paper or wax paper.
- Sprinkles come in all shapes, colors, and sizes, so get creative! Use ones shaped like ornaments, hearts, snowflakes, or gingerbread men.
- Use halved or mini M&Ms instead of sprinkles for the Christmas lights on your sugar cone trees.
- Give it a snow-covered look with some white sprinkles, white sugar pearls, shredded coconut, or powdered sugar on the green frosting!

Storage

Filled Christmas tree cones are best the same day they're made. I doubt you'll have any left on your holiday dessert table, though!

If your kids haven't gobbled 'em all up, store leftovers in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 5 days. Just know that the icing on ice cream cone Christmas trees will dry out a little the longer they sit.

I don't recommend freezing sugar cone Christmas trees.

FAQs

Can I skip the piping bag and just smear the icing on?

You can, but your trees might look like they survived a small blizzard. A piping bag gives you those cute little "branches" and helps the icing set neatly. Smearing works in a pinch — just don't expect Martha Stewart results.

Can I use store-bought frosting instead of royal icing?

Sure but know this: store-bought frosting stays soft and sticky. Royal icing hardens like a dream, which keeps your trees upright instead of slowly slumping over like they've had a long December.

What candies work best for filling the cones?

Anything small and festive — M&M's, mini marshmallows, Skittles, Sixlets, Reese's Pieces, you name it. If it rattles, it works. And yes, you can mix and match because chaos is the holiday spirit.

How far ahead can I make these?

These trees are happiest the same day you make them, but they keep well for up to 5 days in an airtight container. The icing will firm up over time, but that's normal — and honestly helpful for transporting them.

Should I refrigerate sugar cone Christmas trees?

It tends to make them soggy.

Can I freeze them?

No ma'am. Cones get weird and chewy in the freezer, and nobody needs holiday disappointment like that.

Nice to have

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If your holiday baking feels like wrestling a bowl of frosting with a wooden spoon, let this KitchenAid Artisan 5-Quart Stand Mixer swoop in like the Almond Cream-colored angel it is. The tilt-head makes mixing royal icing effortless, the pouring shield keeps powdered sugar from erupting all over your kitchen like Christmas snow gone rogue, and the motor? Strong enough to handle your biggest, boldest baking days without breaking a sweat. This is the mixer I trust when December turns feral. Grab it while it's on sale and treat yourself to a little sanity. [Get it here.](https://www.restlesschipotle.com/sugar-cone-christmas-trees/)