

HOW DO THEY DO THAT???

This month's tutorials (yes you get a bonus, one extra :-)) are by me. I hope you enjoy them.

The first one is a step by step on making the isomalt Christmas lights. Super easy to do and very, very pretty! These lights can be strung on a cake or used individually on cupcakes. Either way, they are sure to please!

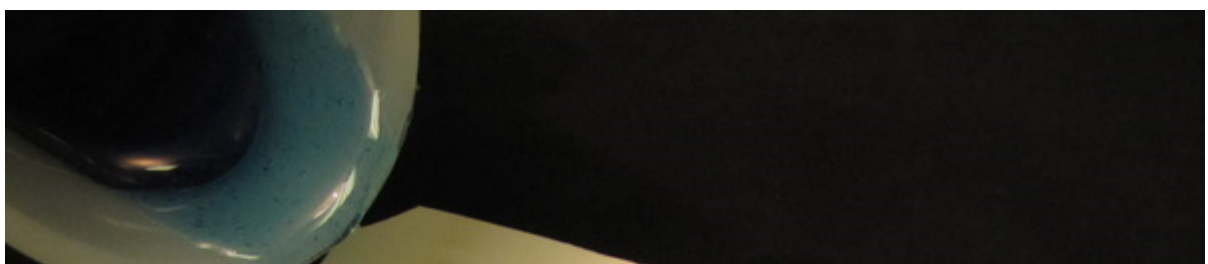
ISOMALT CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

1. I'm using our large [Christmas lights mold](#) (we also have a [tiny one](#), too). Also, the small [silicone cup](#) and [clear isomalt sticks](#). We also carry [clear isomalt nibs](#) if you prefer. If you click on a picture on our website, it will take you to the information/order page where you will see measurements for the molds.





2. **ALWAYS ALWAYS** use protective gloves. Hot sugar STICKS to skin and will continue to burn. You can peel a glove off quickly, but not your skin. We have some wonderful protective gloves by Cake Play. [See here.](#) We carry these gloves in three sizes, small, medium and large. Melt your isomalt in the microwave. I use 50% power and check it every 30 seconds or so. This is sugar so it can burn, don't over nuke :-)) I run a stick through it JUST to make sure all is melted. I should be bubbling. I did color this clear mix by adding a drop of Americolor to it. Gel coloring is recommended, not liquid or powder. Shake your Americolors up well before using. Add the color once it comes out of the microwave and is bubbling. You will hear the color sizzle on top of the bubbling sugar. Wait until it stops sizzling and the water is burned out of it, then gently stir into the isomalt. You also can add disco dust at this point if you want a glittery finished piece. We have a nice variety of discos available. Let the mix sit on the counter a few minutes until most of the bubbles have come to the top and popped. Gently pour into your molds. I take a toothpick and make sure all the sugar is stuck to all the nooks and cervices. One helpful tip if you find your sugar is hardening faster than you can get it to all the nooks, you can warm your mold in the microwave at 50% power for about 20 seconds. Starting with a warm mold will give you a longer "work" time to spread the sugar. Another thing you can do is put the mold on a heating pad and warm it that way. That will give you even more work time. No need to add anything to the mold like a grease. Leave the mold as is.





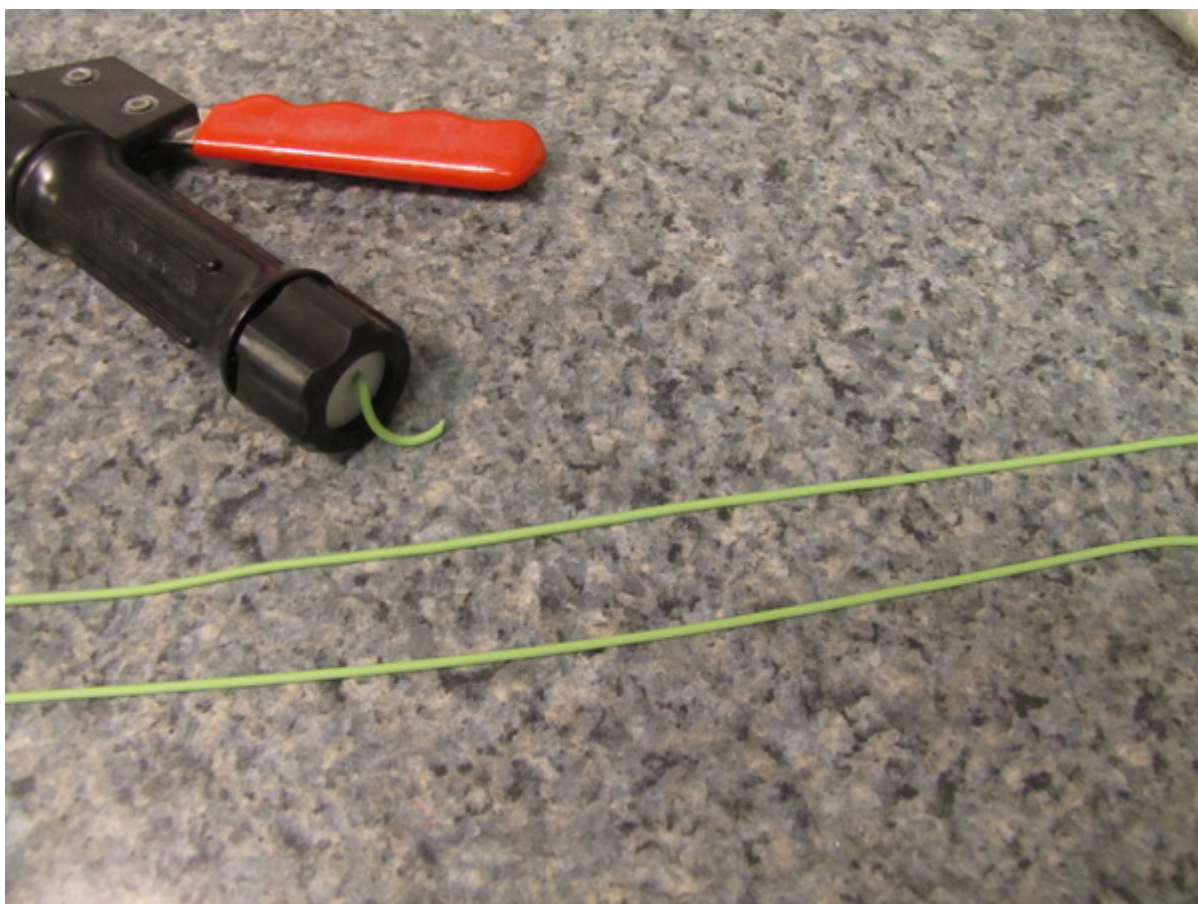
3. Unmold the lights. You usually can tell when they are ready to be unmolded if the mold is no longer warm to touch on the backside.

4. Now it's time to torch them if you want them crystal clear. Any food grade silicone mold will "gas" and create a ever so soft texture on your piece. By taking a creme brulee type torch and gently torching the surface, it will clarify it. This is the torch I purchased at Bed Bath and Beyond (don't forget your coupon :-)) You also can use a grill lighting type Aim N Flame but those are harder to use because they can burn the sugar easier. At least that is my experience. Hold the sugar piece with a pair of tweezers and move it closer and closer to the flame until you can see it clarify. Be careful not to burn it. Safety is first and foremost here friends...PLEASE read the instructions for your torch!!





5. Next, I took my [sugarcraft gun](#) with the small string disk and piped out two lines of fondant. I colored this using avocado Americolor. You also can use gumpaste as well.



6. Let the strings dry just a little and then twist them together like a real light string would be.

7. I like to paint the socket part with silver [hi-liter dust](#).

Simply mix some dust with vodka, I do this in the lid. Mix to the consistency of maple syrup. Then paint the socket part. Let the dust completely dry in the cap before putting the cap back on your container. In doing this, no dust is wasted. You can see the difference of the torched lights, two on left, and the not torched, on right.



8. Here they are!! As always when using isomalt, we recommend you place your pieces on the cake the day of the party. You can make them far in advance, but you need to store them in an airtight container with [desiccant packets](#). These will keep your pieces crystal clear. Humidity can affect your pieces so that's why we recommend placing the day of the party and using the desiccant packets.





It's a WINTER WONDERLAND with beautiful sugar lights and snowflakes.... snowflakes, now that leads us into our next bonus tutorial :-) You are gonna LOVE this!!!

3D Snowflake Tree

1. If you don't have the [PME snowflake plunger set](#), I **HIGHLY** recommend it. I think they are some of the prettiest, easiest snowflakes to make! You get three different sizes in this set, for one low price. We also are using the [XXL cel pin](#) to roll, the [PME star plunger set](#) and the [round & wavy double sided edge](#) cutter set by PME. We used fondant in this demonstration, but gumpaste or pearl clay would also work great. We now have a new size of white [Pettinice, a 1.5 pound size](#). I always try to use the tastiest options. If using pearl clay, you would have to let the flakes dry a couple days to firm up well. If I knew someone would eat these, pearl clay would be my first choice because it's almost all chocolate. The recipe is available on my DVD, [Fun With Fondant Frills](#).

1. Roll out your paste, somewhat thick. To make a full tree, I used two of each size. Keep in mind, these can be made WAY ahead and plopped on your cakes or cupcakes at the last minute. Make a cutout using the snowflake cutter set. I take my fingers and run them along the cutter/paste to refine any jagged edges.

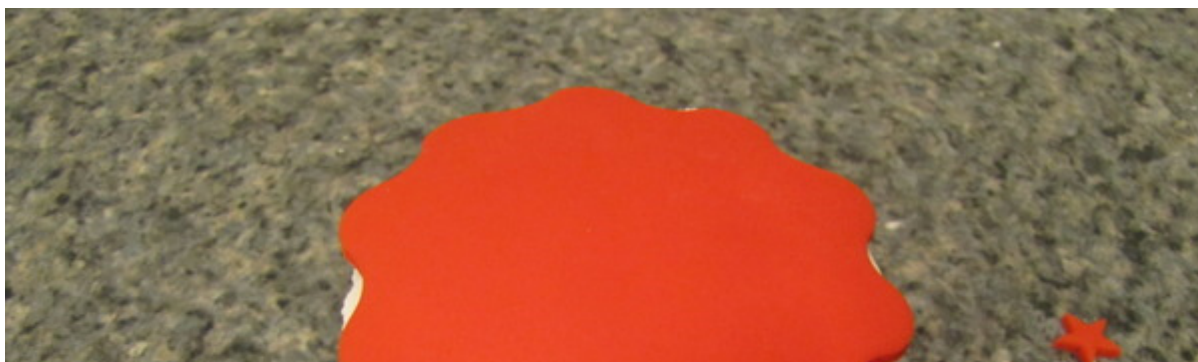


2. Cut two of each size and let dry completely. I just dust my counter and let them sit there. Kind of looks like a little snow storm with the cornstarch :-) Aren't they pretty??? LUV these!





3. Next, roll out some [Satin Ice Red](#). This will be your tree skirt. I used the largest wavy cutter in the above named set. Frost your cupcake and add the tree skirt. I also cut my little star using the PME star plunger set named above. I used the largest cutter in the three pc. set.





There's that cute little star again :-)) He will come in handy later.

4. Once the snowflakes are completely hard, then we can get started. You can build these up ahead of time for future use on a cake or cupcake. But, today I'll show you right on the cake. I would use royal icing to build these so they stay where you want them to. Start with the two largest flakes. Put a little blob of icing "glue" on the cupcake, then the first large flake. Place another blob of icing and place the second largest flake on top the first, staggering the flakes as you go.





5. Then put two medium and the last two smallest flakes on, placing a dot of icing between each layer. Finally, at the top, place a dot of icing and our little star friend that has been waiting patiently to be the cherry on the sundae :-). You then can take [colored dragees](#) and either using a dot of [clear piping gel](#) or a dot of icing, place them here and there on your tree. You may want the tree to set up before decorating then you won't have any chance of the flakes shifting. I did place my fudge marble cupcake (YUM!) in another liner just for presentation.

Here's the little cutie all finished! Do you love it????!!





Of course you could make these in whatever colors you want. I can just picture the kids eyes lighting up when they see these! Hope you enjoyed my tutorials. :-) :-)