**Sugar Skull Recipe**

**CAUTION –**Do not make sugar skulls on a rainy or high humidity day. They will not turn out.

**Meringue Powder Brand – It matters!**

 Start right from the beginning! After much testing, we recommend and sell CK Products meringue powder as it is very strong and one can count on it to create a good quality sugar skull. The only reliable **meringue powder** is from CK Products or the one sold in Sur La Table gourmet kitchen shops/ catalog. **Mix together well in large bowl**1 teaspoon Meringue Powder for every cup of granulated sugar used.

**Step 1**– Mix dry ingredients well. **Step 2 –**Sprinkle sugar mixture with 1 teaspoon water per cup of sugar used.

**Variation** – **Colored Skulls**
Most people prefer white skulls the first time they make them, but if you’d like colored sugar skulls, add paste food coloring TO THE WATER. For a 5 pound bag of sugar, use 1/4 cup meringue powder and 10 teaspoons of water. Yield 5 large skulls or 20 medium skulls or 100 mini skulls or any combination.

For a 10 pound bag of sugar, use 1/2 cup meringue powder and 7 Tablespoons water. Yield 10 large skulls or 40 medium skulls or 200 mini skulls or any combination.

**Sugar Skull Yield Table**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mold Size | # of Skulls | [Sugar](https://www.chsugar.com/recipe/sugar-skulls)(lbs) | Meringue Powder | Water |
| **Large** | 10\* | 10 lbs | 1/2 cup | 7 Tablespoons |
| **Medium** | 40 | 10 lbs | 1/2 cup | 7 Tablespoons |
| **Mini** | 200 | 10 lbs | 1/2 cup | 7 Tablespoons |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Large** | 5\* | 5 lbs | 1/4 cup | 3 Tablespoons |
| **Medium** | 20 | 5 lbs | 1/4 cup | 3 Tablespoons |
| **Mini** | 100 | 5 lbs | 1/4 cup | 3 Tablespoons |

**5 pounds of sugar = approx.10 cups
10 pounds of sugar = 21 cups
3 teaspoons = 1 Tablespoon**

**Meringue Powder Conversion Table**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Weight | Cups (approx.) | Tablespoons | Teaspoons |
| 4 oz. Jar | 1 cup | 16 T | 48 t. |
| 8 oz. Jar | 2 cups | 32 T | 96 t. |
| 1 lb. Bag | 4 cups | 64 T | 192 t. |

**Meringue Powder is a MUST and cannot be omitted.** It is difficult to find, but may be ordered in 4 oz, 8 oz or 1 pound packages on our [**sugar skull molds and supplies page**](https://mexicansugarskull.com/collections/decorating-supplies)**.** Meringue powder is what makes the sugar and the icing hard. Its main ingredient is powdered dry egg whites & starch, but it also includes vegetable gum, cream of tarter, calcium lactate, malic acid & sodium aluminum sulfate. It’s totally edible.

**Powdered Sugar for Royal Icing**1 pound box = 3 1/2 cups
2 pound bag = 7 cups (do not sift Powdered Sugar)

**Measurement:** 3 teaspoons make a Tablespoon: 4 Tablespoons make 1/4 cup. But on this website, 7 Tablespoons (21 teaspoons) of Meringue Powder = 1/2 cup! (Please don’t email me on this!) Sugar Skull making is not an exact science… we like easy measurements! Especially when measuring with kids.

**To Mix Sugar for Sugar Skulls**

Mix well with hands until every bit of sugar is moistened. If your fingerprints remain when you squeeze the sugar in your hand, it is ready to mold. (Right) It should feel like cool “beach sand.”

If it doesn’t hold together, mixture is too dry.

Remember, water sinks, so keep the sugar mixture mixed up frequently as you make your sugar skulls.

**To Mold Sugar Skulls**

Pack sugar mixture FIRMLY into mold with special attention to chins & edges. Use a straight edge to scrape the back of the mold flat. Pack down some more until perfectly tight.

Place a stiff cardboard square (approx. 5″ x 6″) over mold and invert immediately. Lift mold off carefully. Throw any “mistakes” back into your bowl, stir up and try again. If mix is too dry, spritz with a water bottle.

***Sugar Skull Making Tip – is the sugar mix too wet?***

If all the sugar mixture does not fall out of mold easily, it is too wet. Re-mix with a bit more sugar. Hand wash and dry your mold after every 5 skulls to avoid sticking. Most Sugar Skull makers will have a collection of molds to make the molding process more enjoyable.

**To Dry Sugar Skulls**

All sizes of the molded sugar skulls need to air-dry on their card boards from 8 hours to overnight before they are ready to decorate. **Medium and Mini skulls**may be decorated after they are completely dry.

**Large skulls** require a few more steps. They are a 2-piece mold, and must be “scooped out” after they are partially dry; start checking them in 5-6 hours. When the skulls feel dry enough to handle, hold skulls carefully and hollow both the back and the front out with a spoon, leaving the skull wall 1/2″ thick. Do not scoop out the neck area. It’s very important to scoop out the larger skulls as they are so thick, they trap moisture – AND they are so heavy that they slide apart if not scooped.

Set the hollowed skulls upside down to continue drying until totally dry (approx. 12 hours). When completely dry, dust off and assemble the front and back of the skull with a 1/4″ bead of thick royal icing, either applied with a knife or squeezed from an icing bag (one side only). Align points on the back of the skull with the sides of the neck, and press the two sides together until they are firmly connected. The icing will ooze out a little. Drag your finger over the seam to remove excess icing. Try to do this with just one pass – touching the skull too much will make the icing look bad. Drag your finger across the base of the neck crack to remove excess icing. Lay skull aside to dry. When seam is dry, about 2 hours minimum, it is ready to decorate. Sugar skull blanks may be made up to a year ahead of time awaiting decorating. Just store in “breathable” boxes like cardboard. Not plastic lidded boxes.

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***Sugar Skull Making Tip – Large Skulls***

The sugar “scoopings” from Large skulls will net about 50%. Sugar will be soft and moist and may be made into smaller skulls.

This moist sugar may be stored in plastic tightly-topped box for a day or two. When you’re ready to use sugar, give it the hand-squeeze test. If too dry, spritz with the water bottle until it holds together again.

**Royal Icing Recipe**

**Mix** 2/3 cup water, 1/2 cup meringue powder and 2 pounds powdered sugar with an electric/stand mixer until icing peaks (about 9 minutes!) Don’t mix up more than 2 pounds at a time. Keep in a tightly covered container. DO NOT REFRIGERATE.

Royal icing is a cement type icing used for gingerbread house construction. It isn’t very tasty, but it is strong, dries pretty and lasts. Use ONLY concentrated paste food colorings (NOT liquid food coloring from the grocery store!) Yes, we have 12 great colors on our [**sugar skull molds and supplies page**](https://mexicansugarskull.com/collections/decorating-supplies). And a **NEW Electric paste color kit**!

Mix icing & paste colors in disposable cups. Use pastry bags and metal decorating tips if you are a pro or into cake decorating. Yes, we have great disposable pastry bags on the [**Molds and Supplies page**](https://mexicansugarskull.com/collections/decorating-supplies)!

Add 2-3 ounces of Royal Icing (no more than 1/4 full). Squeeze to decorate.

Calculate each 5 pounds of sugar skulls will need 2 pounds of powdered sugar Royal Icing. Most skull makers prefer 5-6 paste colors to decorate with and at least one pack of colored tin foil. Yes, we have tin foil in deep Purple, Magenta, Orange, Gold and Red, see [**sugar skull molds and supplies page**](https://www.mexicansugarskull.com/decorating-supplies/)**.**

***Sugar Skull Making Tip – Royal Icing***

When assembling our Large Sugar Skull, if the two pieces of the skull are sliding around, your **royal icing** is too wet.

Add a Tablespoon of powdered sugar to your icing, to stiffen it up a bit.