

Pricing of Sugar Flowers

“How do I price my sugar flowers?” is a question I get asked all the time. First, a little about the business side of flower making.

Many of you, I’m sure, started making sugar flowers as a hobby, possibly from being members of Cakeflix or a hands-on class. This hobby has now become or could become a very lucrative new business. Making sugar flowers is something many of you do from your home so there are no additional expenses for items like rent, insurance, utilities, etc. that would have to be factored in, unlike having a cake business that was not from your home.

When creating sugar flowers, unlike baking where you need to have a certified legal kitchen or space to bake out of, sugar flowers or air drying clay flowers are classed as a craft, due to having wires, stamens, floral tape, etc. They are made of an edible medium but not something that should be consumed, and I would suggest on a business license calling them “craft flowers.” If you use the word “edible” it could raise a red flag.

When making flowers you don’t need all the things you would need if baking, like legal ovens, freezers, refrigerators, etc. Here in the USA we have the cottage law in most states that allow you to bake certain items from your home kitchen, shelf-stable non-temperature sensitive items like cookies, cupcakes, cakes with shelf-stable icing, buttercream, etc. Usually a health inspection is needed but laws vary state to state and county to county. Different countries all have different laws, so you would need to check with your local food inspectors office.

In most cases you will need a business license and tax number to enable you to off set certain expenses on taxes and operate as a small business separate from personal expenses. For example, be able to buy ribbons from a floral wholesaler were a tax number and business license will be required.

Making only sugar flowers could be a very lucrative business. Not just creating the flowers for a client but revenue can be generated by creating flowers for other cake artists or pastry chefs at local hotels who do not know how to make, (or in the case of a pastry chef in a hotel,) time to make. I have several students that have contracts and make flowers for high end hotels, where they have the potential of earning thousands of dollars a month or even in a week, depending on how busy they wish to be.

I had a student who took an order from the pastry chef at a Ritz Carlton Five Star Hotel. She invoiced the hotel pastry department \$2,000 for the sugar flowers she was asked to produce. The pastry chef charged the client \$5,000 for the sugar flowers as part of a \$12,000 cake. Clients like this do exist. When you are able to offer a chef what he needs, this makes the client happy and in turn makes the chef very happy too.

You must charge what you need to. The hotel will many times add a 100% to 150% mark up on top of your fees. It does not matter where you live. Either a big city or a small town, there are people who are

willing to pay for and appreciate hand-crafted sugar or clay art flowers.

Some of my students have online stores like “Etsy” where they sell flowers. Most are created from air drying clay due to shipping and postage, as these resist breakage, for clients that are searching for a particular flower for their wedding cake.

The next step would be a small rented space at a studio type of location, especially if you want to create cakes for sale. Another option is a shared kitchen space were you rent by the day or hour to legally make the cake and create the flowers from your home.

You can also consider approaching a cake artist who already has an existing space. You may be able to barter flowers in exchange for rent within their space.

Now flowers and cakes...

It does not matter where you live in the world...the raw ingredients for flower paste, gumpaste or baking supplies (eggs, flour and sugar,) are all similar. Whether you make or buy the paste, the factor here is your time and labor. So the more time you put in the more expensive the flower will be. It's that simple, especially if you have an assistant or staff.

As a cake or flower artists that has a independent studio work space in a major city, rent and overheads have to be factored in. If making sugar flowers as a home business, there are no additional expenses for rent, insurance, utilities, etc. to be factored in.

Most bakeries and cake artists, especially in a more high end couture bespoke operation work on approximately \$35.00 per hour plus ingredients. That \$35.00 will cover payroll. For example, \$15-\$18 dollars per hour, overheads like insurance, utilities, etc. and then many would add ingredient costs then double for end cost.

Of course flower paste / gumpaste is not expensive compared to cake ingredients and most of you, if you broke down the cost of time, all the ingredients, electricity, etc. in creating a cake would be shocked that you are probably losing money.

When creating cakes, if you had an employee who took one-hour to make a cake the costs are \$35.00 for ingredients, that would be \$70.00. Then double that you have your selling price at \$140.00 with a 100% profit margin. Sadly, if you don't make a profit you will not have a viable business.

Flowers are the same but the cost of the paste to create them is only very minimum. Labor becomes your largest investment.

When teaching I talk to my students about “commercial level flowers.” This is what I teach. Unlike a flower artist like Alan Dunn, a close friend of nearly 40 years,) who teaches very detailed, botanically correct flowers. These are more of a competition level flowers. It would be very difficult to sell these due to the level of labor that is required. This is the type of flower you do for love for a family member or a very wealthy client!

Commercial, as the word says, are for commercial sale to a client for a wedding or celebration cake that do not always have the same amount of time spent on, due to time and labor. Like using commercial pre

purchased lily stamens instead of hand-made stamens, etc.

The last type of flowers I would like to mention are pre-made flowers. These have become very popular over the years and offer you an alternative to sell to a client who is on a very low budget. Typically, these pre-made flowers are very thick and basic, but spending time with some dusting powders and re-taping them together, it's amazing what can be created! Some of my students who do cakes use these on celebration cakes and use hand-crafted flowers only on wedding cakes, as usually a customer does not want to spend a lot of money on the flowers for say an anniversary cake. But for most people a wedding cake is the single most expensive dessert they will purchase in a lifetime. (However, for some people...multiple times! LOL.)

Of course cakes vary a lot in price, but at the moment the average cost of a 2" X 1" x 4" deep (standard USA serving size) cake serving is around \$6.00. But that could go up to \$15.00-\$20.00 (plus the cost of the flowers) per serving, depending on the design of the cake and location of your business.

I always charge for my sugar flowers separately from the cake. Once the client has settled on what flowers are desired, I then work out the cost of the flowers. Also, there is an "arrangement fee" that is charged. This covers the arrangement for ribbons, time, etc. in putting the flowers together. Just like a floral designer, if you were to go into a flower shop and just bought fresh flowers, you would pay just the retail cost of flowers. If you asked the florist to arrange the flowers, an additional fee would be added to the flower cost.

Remember, when you have a client who wants dark colors, for example red roses, I would add a coloring surcharge, usually 20%. This is for the time required to create the color and cover the additional cost of the red gel/ paste / powder color you are using.

This can also be said for a "dusting surcharge" as you may have to spend a long time dusting the flowers to achieve the results you want. Again add a 20% dusting surcharge to the client.

Not wanting to get into cakes, but I do the same for rolled fondant as there is a huge difference between taking white or color rolled fondant straight out of a container and rolling out and covering a cake, as opposed to having to take white rolled fondant and custom color for a client. This could easily take an additional 30 minutes to 1 hour, as you may have to play around with the colors. This time has to be passed on to the client. Also remember, colored rolled fondant is usually more expensive than white, so even when buying pre-colored rolled fondant this would cost the client more than white fondant.

I do hope this information is helpful in your flower-making journey! Most of all, remember to enjoy the adventure!

Happy flower making!

Sweet wishes,

Chef Nicholas Lodge



The following is from my Renshaw Academy Sugar Flower Module. It is a pricing breakdown of the spray with the pink roses. As in all of my classes and Flower Pro Ultimate Members classes, I break down the costs to pass onto my students.

Flower production and price list for Renshaw Academy sugar flower spray.

Prices are in USA dollars (\$) but you can install a currency converter app to get an idea in other countries currency.

Bouvardia

9x Buds 50c each
6x Flowers \$1.25 each
3x Leafs \$2.00 each
Used in spray \$18.00

Forget-Me-Not

9x Buds 25 c each
6x Flowers \$1.50 each
Used in spray \$11.25

Berries

16 x 50c each
Used in spray \$8.00

Trailing foliage

9x 1.00each
Used in spray 9.00

Calla Lilly

\$4.00 each
Used in spray \$12.00

Anemone

1xFlower \$15.00
1x basic bud \$4.00
1x detailed bud \$ 6.00
3 x Leafs \$2.00 each
Used in spray \$30.00

Roses

1x tight bud \$4.00
1x bud \$6.00
1xmid \$8.00
1xFull \$10.00
1x Fully blown \$12.00
Used in spray \$40.00

Rose Leaf

3 +2 (5) small 50c each
3 +3 + 2 (8) medium 50 c each
3 +3 (6) large 50c each
Used in spray \$9.50

Total flower cost \$137.75

Ribbons and arrangement fee \$50.00

Total \$187.75 UK £138.00 (approximately)

Cost breakdown of raw ingredients flower / gum paste:

Paste cost

\$ 12.00 for 500g

.24 c per gram x340 g of paste

4.48 as this is what I give my students pre cut up and colored.

Actual cost of used paste 1.87 meaning what is left after the project.

Another example:

My Cakeflix tutorial on Autumn Basket Topper:

Mouse tail grasses x3 2.00each

Bittersweet x 24. 1.50 each

Pumpkin. X1 8.00

Sugar maple x 1 large 4.50

Sugar maple x 1 small. 2.50

Curly twigs x 3. 1.00 each

Branches. X 2. 1.50 each

Content total. 63.00

Plus basket 40.00

Plus arrangement fee. 20.00

Grand total \$ 123.00 (UK £90.00)

Here are some prices of popular flowers

Featured in my Flower Pro Books 1 ,2 and 3

Book 1

Roses

Tight bud \$4.00

Bud. \$5.00

Mid. \$6.00

Full. \$7.00

Full blown. \$8.00

Rose Leaves

Small. .50c

Medium .50 c

Large .50c

X large. .75c

Ferns

Small frond .50c

Medium frond .50 c

Large frond. .75 c

Fern tip. \$1.25

Large fern. \$1.50

Baby's Breath

Buds. .25 c

Flowers. .50 c

Mimosa

.50 c

Leaf see fern medium or large

Pussy Willow

.50 c

Forget-Me-Nots

Buds .25c

Flowers. \$1.50

Cherry Blossom

Buds .75 c

Flowers \$2.00

Lily of the Valley

Buds. .50 c

Flowers \$1.50

Hyacinth

Buds .75 c

Flowers \$1.75

Blue Bell

Buds. .75 c

Flowers. \$1.75

Stephanotis

Buds \$1.50

Flowers. \$2.25

Nicotiana

Flowers. \$2.25

Dogwood

Flowers \$2.50

Hydrangea

Buds. .50 c

Flowers. . \$2.00

Lilac

Buds. .50 c

Flowers. \$1.00

Bouvardia

Buds .50 c

Flowers. \$1.25

Jasmine

Buds. .50 c

Flowers. \$1.25

Leaves. .50 c

Plumeria

Buds .50 c

Flowers \$1.00

Book 2**Lily buds**

Small \$1.75

Medium \$2.00

Large. \$2.25

Oriental Lily

Small \$30.00

Large. \$35.00

Lilly Leaves

Small. \$1.50

Large. \$2.00

Tiger Lilly

Small. \$25.00

Large. \$30.00

Calla Lilly

Small \$3.00

Medium \$3.50

Large. \$4.00

XL. \$6.00

XXL. \$8.00

Tulip Leaves

\$4.00

Lily of Valley Leaf

\$2.50

Hosta Leaf

\$6.00

Peony Leaves

Single. \$1.25

Small triple \$3.00

Large triple \$4.00

Classic Peony

Bud & 5.00

Flower \$35.00 (as shown)

Each layer or extra petals \$10.00

Oriental Peony

\$45.00 (as shown)

Parrot Tulip

\$20.00

French Tulips

\$5.00

Quick peony

Bud. \$4.00

Flower. \$12.00

Poinsettia

Small. \$30.00

Large. \$40.00

Book 3**Sunflower**

Small \$10.00

Large \$30.00

Gerbera Daisy

\$18.00

Daisy

Bud .75

Flower \$2.25

Daisy Leaf / Sunflower Leaf

Daisy leaf

Small .75

Large \$1.25

Sunflower Leaf

Small \$3.00

Large \$4.50

Poppy

Bud s/m. \$1.25

Seed head. \$2.25

Small flower. \$7.00

Medium. \$8.00

Large. \$9.00

Leaves

S. .50c

M. .75

L. .75

Maple Leaf

\$4.50

Ginkgo Leaf

\$2.00

Ivy

S. \$1.00

M. \$1.25

L. \$1.50

Wedding foliage**Baby Blue Eucalyptus**

S. .50c

M. .50c

L. .75c

Silver dollar

S. .50c

M. .50 c

L. .75c

XL. .75 c

Seeded

Seeds. .25c

S. .50c

L. .70 c

English boxwood

S/L. 25 c

Italian Ruscus

S. .50c

M. .50 c

L. .75 c

Dusty miller

S. \$1.50

L. \$2.00

Orchids**Oncidium**

Floral tape buds 25 c

Paste buds 50 c

Flowers 4.00

Phalanopsis

Buds 1.50

Flowers 15.00

Cymbidium

Buds 1.50

Flowers 12.50

Dendrobium

Floral tape buds 50c

Paste buds 1.25

Flowers 5.00

Vanda

buds 1.50

Flower 12.50

I hope you will find this helpful in pricing your
sugar flowers for cakes.

Good luck and best wishes!

