

# Bejeweled

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One of the first things I did after deciding what shapes I was considering for this cake, was to actually get some dummies of what I had in mind and see if they look as good in real as I had imagined. After I decided to proceed with these tiers, I put them on cardboards and covered them with fondant, just as you would a real cake. I also covered my board at this time.

After letting the fondant dry for a couple of days, I then assembled my tiers on the fondant covered board using royal icing as adhesive. I filled the seams between each tier with royal icing and smoothed with a damp finger. The next step was to add fabric pieces to the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and bottom tier. I did this on both the front and back of the cake. I trimmed the tiers in a No. 3 snail trail border piped in royal. After all of this had dried, I airbrushed the cake with an edible pearl luster.

I made some scabiosa fantasy flowers to go on the cake as well. I used a gumpaste cutter set and followed the package directions, only I omitted the usual flower center, so I could place a jewel there.





Next I applied the bridgeless string work with royal icing to the ends of the elongated hexagon shaped tiers. I used a Beknel 1.5 tip for the bridge and a Beknel 00 for the extensions. Piping above the string work was done with a No. 1 tip and then painted with edible gold luster after it had dried thoroughly.

To add the scalloped detailing on the two oval tiers, I made a pattern out of adding machine tape and “pin pricked” the pattern into the fondant. After removing the pattern, I used a clay ejector fitted with a No. 1 decorator tip to extrude the fondant to desired size. Following the pin pricked pattern on the cake, I used water to adhere the fondant piece from the clay ejector to the side of the cake. After it dried overnight, I painted the top scallop with edible gold luster and the criss-cross pattern with an edible silver luster. The silver “bezel” set gems were added with royal icing and the gems at the top of each gold point were stuck on with glucose.





The gemstones were made out of isomalt. I went to the hobby store and found plastic gemstones in the sizes and shapes that I wanted. Using the gemstones from the hobby store and silicone plastic, I made my own molds. Some premade molds trap air bubbles when used with isomalt or they leave a dull finish on the sugar gemstone. If your mold has a shiny finish, then your gemstone will, too!

It's important when working with isomalt to have everything ready and accessible and to work at a time when you have no distractions. My work space

consisted of a portable gas burner, a copper bowl for cooking the isomalt, a hot pad glove lined with silicone, a cup of water, pastry brush, pan scraper, digital candy thermometer, small saucepan filled with ice water and a heavy duty demitasse cup, a folded towel, small sharp craft scissors, craft sticks, toothpicks, gemstone molds, and an air tight plastic container filled with desiccant.



The amount of the isomalt recipe I worked with was about  $\frac{1}{2}$  of what is standard. (Standard made more than I could work up at one time and less didn't allow the isomalt to "shock" properly). Place  $\frac{1}{2}$  c isomalt into copper bowl, and using the pan scraper mix in 2 teaspoons of water; just until the isomalt is damp. If you want a colored gemstone, add the color now. Place the pan scraper and the pastry brush in the cup of water. Add candy thermometer to the bowl of isomalt. Turn on the heat (you may have to experiment with this since everyone's heat source may be different) to two marks above minimum. Use wet brush to wash

down the sides of the copper bowl. Leave isomalt to cook until it reaches 340 degrees—do not stir. This usually takes about 10 – 15 minutes for this amount. Isomalt should fully dissolve during this time. While the isomalt is cooking, dry

off your pan scraper with a paper towel. Once the isomalt reaches temperature, take the thermometer out of the isomalt pan and place it in the cup of water. Pour the cooked isomalt out of the copper bowl into the demitasse cup – scraping out any remaining isomalt with the pan scraper. Place the demitasse cup into the bowl of ice water and ”shock” it until it is virtually bubble free. Remove demitasse cup – dry on towel and quickly fill molds by dipping the end of a craft stick or toothpick into the isomalt just enough to get a drop on the end of stick to fill the mold. Leave in mold just until cooled and then turn out. Continue in this fashion until isomalt is too cool in demitasse cup to work up. Trim any excess isomalt from edges of jewels over clean paper toweling with small sharp scissors. Try to handle only the edges of the gemstone and handle them as little as possible. Immediately place the gemstones in an uncovered bowl, and then set that bowl on top of the desiccant in the plastic container and seal tightly with the lid.

After leaving the gemstones in the container of desiccant overnight, I took them out of the container and sprayed them with an edible lacquer to seal out the humidity. This does diminish the shine a bit, but if you live in a high humidity area, they will not stay clear very long without the lacquer. I store all gemstones in the container filled with desiccant until ready to use.

