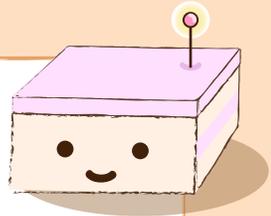


# The Icing on the Cake

## all about buttercream!



from Cakeb0t!

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You've just baked your Famous Family Cake from scratch. Now, how are you going to top it? You have a stacked cake that needs layering, or a thrilling sculpted cake that needs some structure and flavor. What are you going to use to build it? Buttercream to the rescue!

Buttercream icing is one of the most versatile and variable icings available. In this report, you'll learn about 5 basic buttercreams and get the recipes you need to make them!

Let's get to the basics! Buttercream is made by creaming together butter and sugar. Flavorings, colorings, eggs, milk, and heat are added to change consistency, texture and appearance. The most widely used flavorings are, of course, vanilla and chocolate, but you can add almost any extract to achieve the flavor you desire.

Buttercreams are usually light, fluffy, and very smooth. They require a lot of beating, and the right kind of ingredients for smooth results. Some recipes require you to make syrup, so the sugar will dissolve. Other non-syrup recipes will require confectioner's sugar, which leave a smooth (and not gritty!) texture.

When making syrup buttercreams (Swiss, French, Italian), try to use a candy thermometer to insure that the correct temperature has been reached. Correct temperatures can only lead to success in buttercreams! You can also feel the syrup to make sure all the sugar has been dissolved.

One thing to be aware of- buttercream will occasionally refuse to set. The prevailing wisdom is that it is related to humidity and/or barometric pressure. The best climates for each buttercream are indicated in this report.

The following recipes are enough to fill and cover two 9' round cakes. These recipes are basic to each type of buttercream. There are numerous variations of each, found everywhere. If you are adventurous, take one of the basics and experiment with your own additions. ^\_^

Note: Colors (if used) are added at the same time as flavorings.

Let's learn about buttercream!...

# American/Basic Buttercream

Let's start with American Buttercream, or Basic Buttercream and build up from there!

This is the type most commonly used in American bakeries and households because it lasts longer and is more stable at room temperature. In warmer, more humid climates, other types of fat such as vegetable shortening or margarine replace part (or even all) of the butter to keep the icing from melting; adding butter flavoring keeps the flavor consistent. Be aware using fats other than butter will change the "mouthfeel" of the icing. This recipe uses shortening, which makes it good in hotter, more humid climates.

This recipe can either be used to ice the cake, or to decorate the cake! By reducing the amount of whipping, you can make a stiff icing used for making flowers, writing, scrolls and other piping on the iced cake. This is somewhat of a crusting recipe, and will "crust" if left in open air, (the drier the climate, the more quickly it forms and the thicker the crust will be); and the cake icing may even crack if refrigerated uncovered. (Therefore, wherever possible, keep your cake covered.)

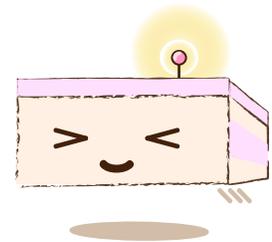
Because fats harden the cooler they get, it is easier to work with buttercreams at room temperature. If you are using left over icing that has been refrigerated, allow it to warm up, then rewhip on low speed. You can speed things along by using a double-boiler. It is NOT recommended to heat buttercream directly.

**Storage:** You can keep Basic Buttercream for 2-3 weeks in a resealable container without refrigeration, it will last for months in the fridge or can be frozen. All buttercreams are quite amenable to picking up odors, so make sure you don't put it in the container that had the marinated garlic or limburger cheese!

**Time:** 30 minutes **Difficulty:** Easy

## Recipe:

2 sticks unsalted butter, room temperature  
2 cups shortening  
1 teaspoon butter flavoring  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1/2 teaspoon almond extract or additional flavoring (optional)  
2 pounds confectioner's sugar  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1 tablespoon meringue powder (optional, but texture will be smoother)  
Water or milk as necessary (approx. 2 tablespoons)



- 1) Using a mixer, mix butter, shortening and salt together, about 5 minutes on low.
- 2) Add extracts and flavorings. Mix well. Add 1 pound of confectioner's sugar and meringue powder and mix.
- 3) Add 1/2 cup of sugar at a time, mixing until it is the consistency you want.
- 4) If necessary, add water or milk 1 teaspoon at a time to thin the frosting. Blend well on low for several minutes.

*Note: Using milk will give a richer flavor, but will also make the buttercream need refrigeration if not used completely.*

# Faux Fondant Buttercream

In case you don't want to use fondant (some people don't like the taste), but you want the look of fondant, you can use this recipe. More so than American Buttercream, this is a true crusting buttercream, and it hardens on the outside when left to dry. The fun part is, that if smoothed properly, it can look a lot like fondant. The secret to smoothing is to let it crust over just a bit so that you can use a tool to smooth it over. Some people smooth over this type of frosting with parchment paper, a smooth (not quilted) paper towel, or even a high density foam roller from a craft or paint supply store!

**Storage:** Because this frosting dries up, it is best used immediately, and not stored.

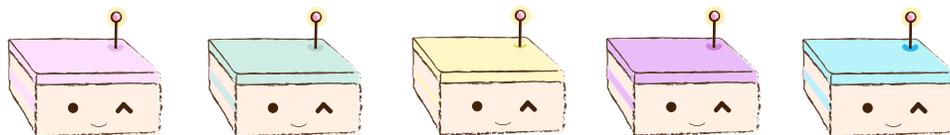
**Time:** 25-30 minutes **Difficulty:** Easy

## Recipe:

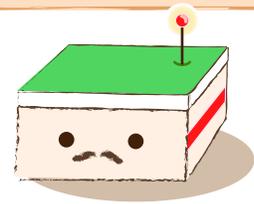
4 pounds confectioner's sugar  
2 cups shortening  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1 cup milk  
1/2 teaspoon clear vanilla  
1/2 teaspoon clear butter flavoring  
1/2 teaspoon almond extract  
1/2 teaspoon creme royale or creme bouquet, optional  
1/2 cup cornstarch

- 1) In mixing bowl, beat shortening and salt together until fluffy.
- 2) Combine wet ingredients and add to shortening. Beat until thoroughly combined.
- 3) Add sugar, a cup at a time until all incorporated.
- 4) Add cornstarch and beat on low for about 15 minutes.

*Note: This frosting will get firmer as it sets up, so you will want to have it already prepared before you bake the cake.*



# Italian Buttercream



Now we start with the syrup buttercreams. Italian Buttercream uses water and sugar to make a syrup. This syrup is slowly poured into a meringue. Then, the butter is added to that meringue. It's simple, but it takes practice! This is another delicious buttercream because it has a good flavor, but it isn't too sweet. It withstands hot weather fairly well, and is great for layering cakes. This recipe uses uncooked eggs.

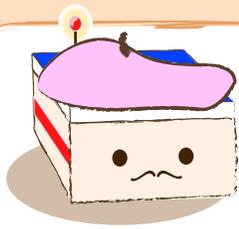
**Storage:** This type needs to be used or refrigerated within a few hours.

**Time:** 40-50 minutes **Difficulty:** Intermediate

## Recipe:

- 1 1/4 cup + 1/3 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup water
- 8 large egg whites, room temperature
- 1 teaspoon cream of tartar
- 1 1/2 pounds (6 sticks) unsalted butter, cut into cubes

- 1) Put 1 1/4 cup sugar and water in a saucepan. Stir to wet the sugar and bring to a boil over medium heat. Using a clean, damp pastry brush, wash down the sides of the pan.
- 2) Meanwhile, put the egg whites in a grease-free mixing bowl and whip until frothy. Add cream of tartar and whip until soft peaks form.
- 3) Add 1/3 cup sugar and whip until stiff glossy peaks form.
- 4) When the boiling syrup reaches 240 degrees F, reduce mixing speed of the whites to medium and slowly pour the syrup (in a thin stream) into the egg whites. Try not to get syrup on the sides of the bowl or hard sugarballs may form in the meringue.
- 5) Continue to whip until cooled, which may take up to 15 minutes. Add pats of butter and continue whipping until smooth and all the butter is incorporated.



# French Buttercream

This is another syrup buttercream. French buttercream is made the same way as Italian buttercream, but you use egg yolks or whole eggs, instead of just egg whites. People really, really love the rich flavor of French Buttercream. This recipe has a yellow tint to it, so it may be hard to achieve certain colors with this, especially pale colors.

**Storage:** This type must be used or refrigerated immediately.

**Time:** 40-50 minutes **Difficulty:** Intermediate

## Recipe:

2 pounds sugar  
8 fl oz water  
12 fl oz egg yolks  
2 1/2 pounds (10 sticks) unsalted butter  
1/2 fl oz vanilla extract

- 1) Put sugar and water in a saucepan. Stir to wet sugar and bring to a boil over medium heat. Using a clean damp pastry brush, wash down the sides of the pan.
- 2) Meanwhile, whip the egg yolks in a stand mixer until they are thick and very light.
- 3) When the boiling syrup reaches 240 degrees F, reduce the mixing speed of the yolks to medium-low and pour syrup (in a thin stream) into the yolks. Try to avoid getting the syrup on the sides of the bowl or hard sugarballs may form.
- 4) Continue whipping until completely cooled. The mixture will be light and thick. Add butter in small chunks, only as fast as it can be absorbed into the mixture.
- 5) Finally, add vanilla and beat for several more minutes.

# Swiss Buttercream

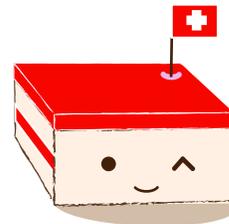
This is my personal favorite buttercream to use as filling. It's all butter, and therefore delicious. It's also pretty stable, especially for cakes that need good structure, like a 3D or sculpted cake. It is good to work with this buttercream at cool or room temperature. This is another syrup-based buttercream.

**Storage:** This type needs to be used or refrigerated within a few hours.

**Time:** 30-40 minutes **Difficulty:** Intermediate

## Recipe:

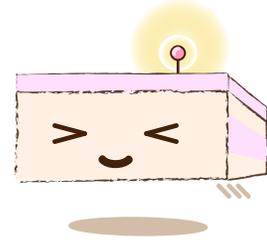
12 fl oz egg whites (about 10 large eggs or 1 1/2 cups)  
3 cups granulated sugar  
3 pounds unsalted butter, cool to room temperature  
2 tablespoons of vanilla extract (or extract flavor of your choice),  
(OR up to 3 fl oz light rum, framboise, or kirsch)



- 1) Lightly whisk egg whites and sugar together over simmering water until all the sugar is dissolved, or until candy thermometer reads 140 degrees F. You can give the solution a pinch to see if you feel granules of sugar still undissolved.
- 2) Pour hot mixture into a room temperature bowl and whip with a whisk attachment on medium high speed until it doubles in volume. (when you shut off the mixer, the meringue should not move around) Meanwhile cut up the butter into cubed pieces.
- 3) On your mixer, change out the whisk attachment for the paddle if you want a smooth consistency. You can leave the whisk attachment on if you're just using it for filling. Add 1/2 the butter and pulsate the mixer to get the butter to the bottom. (You do this by starting and stopping the mixer rapidly several times.) Add the rest of the butter a few cubes at a time and pulsate several more times. Starting on low, increase the mixer's speed every 10 seconds until you reach medium high.
- 4) Continue beating the mixture until it begins to look light and fluffy. Stop the mixer and scrape the bowl. Turn the mixer back on to low, and add flavoring(s). Continue on low for 45 seconds, then increase speed to medium high for 45-60 seconds.

## American/Basic Buttercream Recipe

- 2 sticks unsalted butter, room temperature
- 2 cups shortening
- 1 teaspoon butter flavoring
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon almond extract or additional flavoring (optional)
- 2 pounds confectioner's sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon meringue powder (optional, but texture will be smoother)
- Water or milk as necessary (approx. 2 tablespoons)



- 1) Using a mixer, mix butter, shortening and salt together, about 5 minutes on low.
- 2) Add extracts and flavorings. Mix well. Add 1 pound of confectioner's sugar and meringue powder and mix.
- 3) Add 1/2 cup of sugar at a time, mixing until it is the consistency you want.
- 4) If necessary, add water or milk 1 teaspoon at a time to thin the frosting. Blend well on low for several minutes. *Note: Using milk will give a richer flavor, but will also make the buttercream need refrigeration if not used completely.*

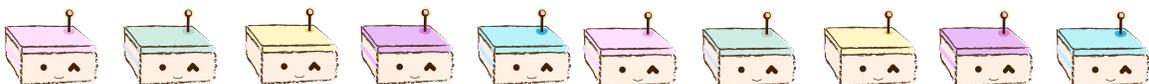
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## Faux Fondant Recipe:

- 4 pounds confectioner's sugar
- 2 cups shortening
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup milk
- 1/2 teaspoon clear vanilla
- 1/2 teaspoon clear butter flavoring
- 1/2 teaspoon almond extract
- 1/2 teaspoon creme royale or creme bouquet, optional
- 1/2 cup cornstarch

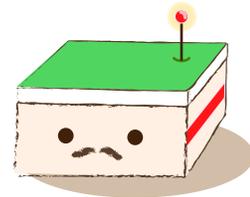
- 1) In mixing bowl, beat shortening and salt together until fluffy.
- 2) Combine wet ingredients and add to shortening. Beat until thoroughly combined.
- 3) Add sugar, a cup at a time until all incorporated.
- 4) Add cornstarch and beat on low for about 15 minutes.

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## Italian Buttercream Recipe:

- 1 1/4 cup + 1/3 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup water
- 8 large egg whites, room temperature
- 1 teaspoon cream of tartar
- 1 1/2 pounds (6 sticks) unsalted butter, cut into cubes



- 1) Put 1 1/4 cup sugar and water in a saucepan. Stir to wet the sugar and bring to a boil over medium heat. Using a clean, damp pastry brush, wash down the sides of the pan.
- 2) Meanwhile, put the egg whites in a grease-free mixing bowl and whip until frothy. Add cream of tartar and whip until soft peaks form.
- 3) Add 1/3 cup sugar and whip until stiff glossy peaks form.
- 4) When the boiling syrup reaches 240 degrees F, reduce mixing speed of the whites to medium and slowly pour the syrup (in a thin stream) into the egg whites. Try not to get syrup on the sides of the bowl or hard sugarballs may form in the meringue.
- 5) Continue to whip until cooled, which may take up to 15 minutes. Add pats of butter and continue whipping until smooth and all the butter is incorporated.

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- 8 fl oz water
- 12 fl oz egg yolks
- 2 1/2 pounds (10 sticks) unsalted butter
- 1/2 oz vanilla

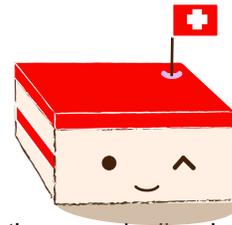


- 1) Put sugar and water in a saucepan. Stir to wet sugar and bring to a boil over medium heat. Using a clean damp pastry brush, wash down the sides of the pan.
- 2) Meanwhile, whip the egg yolks in a stand mixer until they are thick and very light.
- 3) When the boiling syrup reaches 240 degrees F, reduce the mixing speed of the yolks to medium-low and pour syrup (in a thin stream) into the yolks. Try to avoid getting the syrup on the sides of the bowl or hard sugarballs may form.
- 4) Continue whipping until completely cooled. The mixture will be light and thick. Add butter in small chunks, only as fast as it can be absorbed into the mixture.
- 5) Finally, add vanilla and beat for several more minutes.

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### Swiss Buttercream Recipe:

12 fl oz egg whites (about 10 large eggs or  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups)  
3 cups granulated sugar  
3 pounds unsalted butter, cool to room temperature  
2 tablespoons of vanilla extract (or extract flavor of your choice),  
(OR up to 3 oz light rum, framboise, or kirsch)



- 1) Lightly whisk egg whites and sugar together over simmering water until all the sugar is dissolved, or until candy thermometer reads 140 degrees F. You can give the solution a pinch to see if you feel granules of sugar still undissolved.
- 2) Pour hot mixture into a room temperature bowl and whip with a whisk attachment on medium high speed until it doubles in volume. (when you shut off the mixer, the meringue should not move around) Meanwhile cut up the butter into cubed pieces.
- 3) On your mixer, change out the whisk attachment for the paddle if you want a smooth consistency. You can leave the whisk attachment on if you're just using it for filling. Add  $\frac{1}{2}$  the butter and pulsate the mixer to get the butter to the bottom. (You do this by starting and stopping the mixer rapidly several times.) Add the rest of the butter a few cubes at a time and pulsate several more times. Starting on low, increase the mixer's speed every 10 seconds until you reach medium high.
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