

CAKE WRECKS

WHEN PROFESSIONAL CAKES GO HORRIBLY, HILARIOUSLY WRONG

Turn Your CakeWreck into a Dream!



FIGURE 1: CHOCOLATE CAKE (ADOBE STOCK)

*Written by Shawna Birnbaum
26 July 2019*

Here at CakeWrecks, we love... well, cake wrecks.

They're fun to laugh at, but of course, we want you to make the best cakes you can possibly get your fingers on. Follow these tips below!

Say NO to water!

Some cake recipes will call for water.

YAWN.

Don't.

Instead, spruce up your cake recipe with espresso or with dairy, depending on the kind of cake you're making.

If you're making a chocolate cake, replace the amount of water called for with espresso or brewed coffee. The coffee will give the chocolate an extra kick.



FIGURE 2: CUPS OF COFFEE (ADOBE STOCK)

“Coffee adds depth and nuance, intensifying chocolate flavors and obscuring any ‘processed’ ones, giving the dessert a more homemade quality.” – Claire Lower, Lifehacker

If you’re baking a cake that has a more subtle flavor profile, like vanilla, then use dairy to achieve a similarly enhanced effect.

Short on Time? Cake Mix + Soda Pop!

If you’re strapped for time and need to churn something out for a party, you can make an easy cake with just a box of cake mix and soda! Sounds weird, right? It’s actually really good!

According to Eric Troy of Culinary Lore, “The flavor of soda you choose will determine the flavor of the cake. You can have lemon-lime, orange creamsicle, strawberry, and even grape. People even make Dr Pepper cake and Pepsi Cola cake.”

If you aren’t certain, then you can start out by using a basic white cake mix and a can of neutral-flavored soda (we recommend a lemon-lime!).

If you’re vegan, then it’s all good: just be sure to use a vegan cake mix.



FIGURE 3: CAKE MIX + BAKING SODA (ADOBE STOCK)

Mayonnaise!

AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH, we know, we know – it sounds crazy and maybe you might want to hurl at the mere thought.

But before you do, swallow that upchuck and at least hear us out.

If you really break it down, mayonnaise is just egg, oil, and vinegar – all the ingredients that usually go into a cake batter. The oil in the mayonnaise produces an incredibly moist cake that will have you yearning for seconds and thirds.

“2-3 tablespoons of full-fat mayonnaise will replace a single egg.”

Strive to Simplify says that 2-3 tablespoons of full-fat mayonnaise will replace a single egg. We don't actually know if any vegan mayonnaise would work just the same, but please let us know if you decide to give it a try!



FIGURE 4: MAYONNAISE (ADOBE STOCK)

It's also good to note that if you choose to use mayonnaise, it is best to skip the oil if the recipe calls for it. If you choose to ignore this, then at least reduce the amount of oil you add.

Check out our favorite [chocolate mayonnaise cake recipe](#) from Epicurious, which can be made for both cakes and cupcakes.

Happy baking!



FIGURE 5: CHOCOLATE MAYONNAISE CAKE (EPICURIUS)

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Cookie Butter Frosting: A Recipe

Written by *Shawna Birnbaum*
19 July 2019

The Nitty Gritty

Speculoos spread has risen in popularity in the last several years, but before we tell you how to make a frosting out of this jar of heaven, let's talk about the basics of making frosting you'll need to get the hang of beforehand.

It is surprisingly easy to make a kickass buttercream frosting, but also incredibly easy to mess up if you don't get the ratio correct. It can come out too sweet or too fatty or too thin if you aren't careful. So how *do* you make a kickass buttercream frosting? Here are the things we recommend.



FIGURE 6: COOKIE BUTTER
(AMAZON)

The Basic Skeleton of Buttercream Frosting

- butter
- confectioners' sugar
- pure vanilla extract
- milk

Butter

If you're vegan, skip this part (we'll tackle vegan substitutes in another post).

Use butter, not margarine. The vegetable oil in margarine is great for easy spreading on bread and other savories, but as a fat component in buttercream frosting, it will just leave behind an oily aftertaste. Not only that, but margarine has a higher water ratio than butter, which gives your frosting a less stable structure.



FIGURE 7: BUTTER
(ADOBE STOCK)

Real butter should have a weighty (is that a word? It is now), but subtle cream flavor, which is exactly how you want your frosting to taste, so save the margarine for your dinner rolls and get yourself a pack of real butter. Salted or unsalted is inconsequential, but salted butter kills two birds with one stone where you don't have to add any salt.

Lastly, let the butter sit out to room temperature when you start getting ready to bake.

Electric Mixer

Something every kitchen *should* have, unless you like giving yourself carpal tunnel. You'll save a lot of time and energy when mixing ingredients together and it creates an airy, whipped frosting. But be careful not to mix too high. Mixing frosting on too high of a speed will incorporate too much air, leaving ugly air bubbles upon spreading.

We recommend **Hamilton Beach 6 Speed Hand Mixer with Pulse and Snap-On Case**, \$24.99 (Source: [Target](#))



FIGURE 8: HAND MIXER (TARGET)

Confectioners' Sugar

It should not have to be said, but there are people who still think table sugar is perfectly acceptable in a homemade buttercream frosting. Please, please, please don't do that. Confectioners' sugar is much lighter in weight and should not at all be "experienced" in a buttercream frosting, except its sweetness.



FIGURE 9: CONFECTIONERS' SUGAR
(ADOBE STOCK)

The 1:1 Ratio

This is extremely important. Most recipes you find on the internet will call for a 2:1 sugar to butter ratio. Frankly, this is a really good way to physically feel your train ride to Diabetes-ville.

We did a little testing in our kitchen and found that a 1:1 sugar to butter ratio was perfect. Of course, you can tailor this to your liking, but for those who are unfamiliar with the craft, we suggest 1:1. Whatever you choose, the sugar ratio should never exceed the butter ratio. It's finger-lickin' perfect.

Vanilla Extract

You can find real vanilla extract in any grocery store but remember to buy vanilla extract – not vanilla powder, not vanilla sugar.

RECIPE

Now, the moment you probably have not been waiting for.

For all of our lecturing and griping about the kind of sugar you should use, we're actually going to skip the sugar all together in this recipe because Speculoos spread is already packed with sugar. Trust us on this one.

Ingredients

- 1 cup butter, room temperature
- 1 cup Speculoos spread
- 1 tablespoon milk or milk substitute
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract

Directions

1. With a hand mixer on low speed, mix butter and Speculoos spread in a mixing bowl until barely combined.
2. Add milk and continue mixing for 30 seconds on low speed.
3. Add vanilla extract and continue mixing on low speed until ingredients are fully blended into a whipped consistency.

If you find the frosting to be too thick, add a little more milk and mix until desired consistency. If it's too thin, then add a 1:1 ratio of butter and Speculoos. This can be refrigerated for up to four days (but if you still have it after four days, then shame on you!).

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Frosting: A Love Story

Written by Shawna Birnbaum
12 July 2019

A Childhood Without Frosting

Truth be told, I was never a huge fan of frosting.

My earliest memory of frosting is the cans of Duncan Hines and Betty Crocker that are mass-produced in a factory with too much high fructose corn syrup and too little butter.

My working-class mother had four children, including myself, so birthday parties were centerpieceed with a boxed white cake and a can of vanilla frosting purchased from my uncle's convenience store just down the road.

Such aversion to the canned taste of these cans of edible paste made it so that I was in the minority who would rather eat the cake *alone*.

I remember scraping and plucking off the greasy layers of frosting with pincer fingers, offering them to my friends who gobbled them up while I enjoyed the light and airy sponginess of the cake itself.

My parents were proud.

Bride and Prejudice

As I grew older with my own money to spare, I was able to experience high quality frosting at places like Sprinkles in Beverly Hills or MILK on Beverly Boulevard in Los Angeles.

"Hmm, this isn't so bad," I thought. Of course.

As a 23-year-old newlywed who didn't know how to cook, I put myself in the



FIGURE 10: FROSTING ON BEATER (ADOBE STOCK)

kitchen every day for twelve hours straight, practicing different cooking and baking techniques with my husband as the proud taste-tester. I asked my food-versed friends hundreds of questions and scoured the internet for different recipes daily.

Chef's Table

Week-by-week, our kitchen amassed a collection of pantry staples; spices, oils, baking sheets, pans, and every other nonperishable on sale at Whole Foods.

I raided the local Mexican and Korean markets in our Koreatown neighborhood, too. Trader Joe's became my best friend.

Eggs of Enlightenment

Then I began to tackle baking, where I made the discovery that I love baking more than I do cooking. Perhaps my fondness for sweets had something to do with it.

Or maybe the sound of eggshells cracking and the sight of egg whites stretching over a spoon-pressed well of flour.

Or maybe it was the science-like precision involved in making sure the measurements are exactly what was called for and the little guidelines such like not mixing wet ingredients with dry ingredients until you're *absolutely* ready to begin baking because... SCIENCE.

As my baking skills progressed, I decided to cap it off with the most basic of recipes: buttercream frosting.

With a little bit of tweaking, I had finally done it: crafted my own chocolate buttercream frosting.

I finally understood what everyone meant when their eyes widened at the mere mention of frosting.

What it meant when their eyes gently shut upon a light sampling of a finger-scoop of well-made buttercream. Suffice to say, my life hasn't been the same since.

Of Mice and Frosting

I spoke to a friend recently who complained of how disgusting frosting is and she said, "The gritty sugar feeling is the worst."



FIGURE 11: ICING (ADOBE STOCK)

HOLD THE PHONE.

“Gritty sugar? You’re *meant* to use powdered sugar,” I declared in my best snobby voice.

It was almost as if dynamite had gone off in her head.

“If you’re using regular table sugar to make frosting,” I continued. “Then you *basic!*”

Finishing my declaration with an index finger in the air, I dragged her to Trader Joe’s in Silverlake where I purchased all the things necessary to make a good frosting. Strapped for time, I bought a basic premade cake mix, butter, confectioners’ sugar, vanilla extract, but somehow managed to forget the baking chocolate for, you know, chocolate buttercream.

I put her in charge of taking care of the boxed cake mix while I dictated and narrated very carefully what I knew about making a great frosting to her.

When we realized that we had forgotten to buy baking chocolate, we searched her cabinets in a panic and stumbled upon an unopened jar of Trader Joe’s Cookie Butter.

Twenty minutes later, my famed Speculoos frosting was born, all because I forgot to grab baking chocolate. My friend declared it the best she’s ever had and the recipe has been blowing minds ever since.


Recipe in next week’s blog post! Stay tuned!




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cakewrecks The only thing standing between you and the cake of your dreams is mayonnaise. [Read more!](#)

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ADDENDUM

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this blog is to help our readers create the best cakes at home. Recipes, tips, and tricks for all baking enthusiasts so they can impress their family, friends, colleagues, etc. with their handcrafted baked goods. Our writers will use the same humor and will emphasize on easy-to-learn recipes using easy-to-obtain ingredients that are also cost-effective.

Audience Analysis

1. Age: The intended interactors are teenagers to late 30's.
2. Gender: Target audience is not gender-specific.
3. Education: At the very minimum, a high school education or equivalent.
4. Context: The target audience is from urban and suburban areas or areas where they would have access to major grocery stores.
5. Cultural perspective: The target audience is likely North American given the recipes are in imperial, but conversion to metric is always possible, so the nationalities are much broader.
6. Socio-economic: The target audience is working class to upper middle class.
7. Expertise: The target audience should be able to follow recipes and have some knowledge of baking.
8. Attitudes: The target audience has a positive attitude towards the humor of the site and a positive attitude towards sweets.

TRUSTED WRITER REVIEW

Name: Melissa Duchan

Date/time: 5 August, 2019 – 12:00 PM EST

Email address: melissad1997@gmail.com

Questions:

1. Is this believable as a blog?
2. Are the topics sound and related to CakeWrecks.com?
3. Is this something you would subscribe to?

Reflection:

When I was a recruiter in the advertising industry, my manager – a former producer with Team One and Chiat/Day – once told me that copywriting is 90% research and 10% writing.

I felt like this was the most time-consuming project I've worked on so far in my academic career with a majority of the work being put towards layering, chunking, formatting, finding photos, and so forth.

I'm exhausted thinking about it.

However, it has made me realize that I could start a food blog, like I've always wanted to.

And I think I will.