

Simple Buttercream Recipe

Basic Buttercream Frosting

- 2 lbs powdered sugar
- 1 cup shortening (or 1/2 cup shortening and 1/2 cup room temp butter)
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- About 1/8 to 1/2 cup milk (more or less depending on how firm you want your icing)

Instructions

- Cream shortening and vanilla together for 2-4 minutes. Add powdered sugar 1/4 bag at a time.
- Slowly add in milk small amounts at a time until desired consistency.

Swiss Meringue Buttercream Cake Recipe

INGREDIENTS

- 8 egg whites (about 1 cup or 240 ml)
- 1 cup (200 g) granulated sugar
- 3 cups (680 g) unsalted butter at room temperature
- 1 cup (125 g) confectioner's sugar (sifted)
- Pinch salt
- 2 tablespoons (30 ml) vanilla extract

DIRECTIONS

Over a double boiler, heat the whites and granulated sugar and salt, whisking constantly, until all the sugar is dissolved. Heat this slowly!! You don't want scrambled eggs!

Place the mixture in a stand mixer and whip on high until a peak forms and the mixture is cool, about 5 minutes.

Turn the mixer to medium speed and add the softened butter a little at a time. Remember, depending on your area, you may need more or less butter.

Add the powdered sugar and vanilla and mix.

Tip: In warmer climates/seasons you will want to change the amount of butter to 4 sticks (2 cups) and also add 1 1/2 cups of vegetable shortening to the buttercream. This will give more stability when the weather is hot.

Stabilizing American Buttercream

AMERICAN BUTTERCREAM

- 1 ½ lbs. butter (the real stuff) at room temperature
- 2 lbs. powdered sugar
- 2 tsp. vanilla
- 2 Tbsp. Meringue Powder

Before getting to the instructions, let's talk a little bit about butter versus shortening. I prefer to always use real butter because I live and decorate cakes in Central Florida where it is hot and humid most of the year. If you feel more comfortable using shortening, it is definitely an option. If you need perfectly white buttercream, I find it is best to use hi ratio shortening. Crisco has taken all of the trans fats out of their shortening, which is better for your health, but can make the buttercream slightly gritty. Hi ratio shortening holds up better than Crisco and won't make your frosting gritty, but does contain trans fats. Now we're ready to begin!

Step 1: Cream the butter and vanilla for 1-2 minutes.

Note:

While we are creaming the butter, I am going to go out on a limb and confess a small secret: I use salted butter. My grandmother always added salt to her buttercream as it helped take the greasiness away and enhanced the flavor of the butter. Though, I noticed that her buttercream was slightly grainy. So I tried making buttercream with salted butter and discovered that I loved it! The salt is already dissolved in the butter, so you don't get the graininess and it really does enhance the flavor.

Step 2: Add ½ of the powdered sugar and all of the meringue powder. Then mix until incorporated.

Step 3: Add the remaining powdered sugar.

Powdered sugar can make a huge mess, so I have found that wrapping a large piece of plastic wrap or a paper towel around the bowl and mixer will help reduce the mess when it is mixing.

Step 4: Beat on high for 6-7 minutes.

Once the first half is added, add the remaining powdered sugar and mix on low until combined. The buttercream will go through a stage where it looks dry and almost curdled, just keep mixing!

Don't add milk or whipping cream. Once all of the powdered sugar is incorporated, turn the mixer on high and let it whip for 6-7 minutes. This may seem like a long time, but believe me, you will be glad you did!

Now, while we are waiting for the buttercream to be finished, let's talk about meringue powder. I have found that adding the meringue powder to my buttercream helps stabilize it and makes for a melt-in-your-mouth texture. I have also discovered that not adding liquid to the buttercream helps it hold its shape.

In the heat and humidity of Florida this recipe has held up well. The other thing I love about butter-based buttercreams is that when they are chilled, the icing becomes cold and hard which makes the cakes much easier to work with, and when at room temperature they are soft and silky.

Now we have a creamy, smooth buttercream that will hold up well and tastes delicious!