

Great Girl Scout
cupcake
Challenge



Recipes
And
Decorating Tips

Basic Cupcake Tips



Preparing Cupcakes

- Line cupcake pans with cupcake papers.
- When baking cupcakes, place pan in the middle of a preheated oven.
- Set a timer so that you don't forget about your cupcakes.
- Bake cupcakes for the minimum time suggested, then test them to see if they're done.
- Cupcakes are done when you can insert a toothpick into the middle of one and it comes out clean and dry.
- Always wear oven mitts when removing cupcake pans from the oven.
- Place cupcake pan on cooling rack for at least 5 minutes.
- Remove cupcakes from the pan and place them back on the rack to cool further.
- Let the cupcakes cool completely before you decorate them

Basic Cupcake Recipes

Boxed cake mixes work perfectly well for cupcakes. Try jazzing them up by adding nuts, candies or fruit to mix. If you want to try a homemade recipe, here some good ones to try.

YELLOW VANILLA CUPCAKES

2 c. flour, sifted
1/2 tsp. salt
2 tsp. baking powder
1/2 c. butter
1 1/4 c. sugar
2 eggs
1 tsp. vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 375°F.

Line 24 muffin pans with paper liners or grease pans and sprinkle lightly with flour.

Combine flour, salt and baking powder together; set aside.

Cream butter. Add sugar, beat until light and fluffy.

Beat in eggs, beating well after each addition, stir in flour mixture, then vanilla. Add 4 or more table-spoons milk, if needed, to bring batter to correct consistency (this varies with the flour you're using - some flours absorb more water than others).

Put in prepared pans, bake about 12-20 minutes (depends upon size of muffin cups used). If you're making 12 large instead of 24 small, reduce oven temperature to 350°F.

Makes about 24 cupcakes.

Recipe courtesy of Sara Lane, WV Cake Lady

CHOCOLATE CUPCAKES

2 sticks unsalted butter (8 ounces)
1 cup granulated sugar (7 ounces)
light brown sugar (7 3/4 ounces)
4 eggs (one at a time)
6 oz. chocolate, melted and cooled for 15 minutes
2 cups cake flour (9-1/4 ounces)
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 cup buttermilk (room temperature)
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

Cream together butter, granulated sugar, light brown sugar (7-3/4 ounces). Add eggs, beating well after each addition. Stir in chocolate. Sift cake flour with baking soda. Add 1/3 of the flour mixture; stir in 1/2 buttermilk mixed with the vanilla. Add alternating liquid and dry until flour and buttermilk have been used.

Place paper or silicone cupcake liners into each cup of 2 muffin pans (each pan yielding 12 muffins). Then fill each cup with 1 leveled off scoop of an ice cream scooper.

Bake in a preheated 350°F oven (not convection) for 20 to 25 minutes or until a cake tester inserted in center comes out clean.

Yields 24 to 27 cupcakes

Recipe courtesy of Sara Lane, WV Cake Lady

Green Velvet Cake

2 1/2 cups all purpose flour	1 cup oil
2 cups sugar	1 cup buttermilk
1 Tablespoon cocoa	1 Tablespoon vinegar
1 teaspoon salt	1 teaspoon vanilla
1 teaspoon baking soda	1 oz. green food coloring
2 eggs	

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees.

Grease your cake or cupcake pan.

Lightly stir eggs in a medium bowl with whisk. Add in remaining liquid ingredients except the food coloring. Whisk until blended and sit aside.

Place all dry ingredients in a different mixing bowl and stir together well.

Add the entire bottle of food coloring to the liquid ingredients.

Pour your wet ingredients into your dry ingredients and mix on medium-high for about a minute or two until well combined and green.

Pour the batter into cake pans or cupcake pans.

Let cook for 10-15 minutes and then remove from pans.

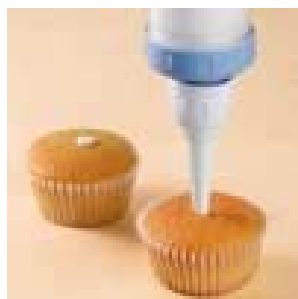
While cooling, prepare frosting. You can either open a can of your favorite, or go the from scratch route.

Recipe courtesy of Becky White, GSBDC

Icing Filled Center

You can really have fun with flavor when you add a tasty icing filling to your baked cupcakes. Filling the centers is easy using the Round Decorating Tip 230.

Instructions



Step 1

Prepare a decorating bag with your icing filling and Round Decorating Tip 230; insert tip in top center of an un-iced cupcake and squeeze out a small amount of filling. Or, use the Wilton Dessert Decorator, which includes a filling tip and an easy-to-control cylinder for adding just the right amount.



Step 2

Cut open your cupcake or take a bite and find a yummy surprise!

Suggested fillings for cupcakes:

- Jams or jellies
- Pudding
- Mousse
- Flavored cream cheese frosting

Recipes for cupcake fillings may be found at www.wilton.com.

Cupcake Frosting Strategies

Cupcakes are iced with any of the icings that might be used for a cake. Use a single color, create color streaks, or create a marble effect. Icing methods for cupcakes can be quick and simple or require careful attention. Following are some cake decorating tips:

- Dip each cupcake headfirst into a dish of thin icing—swirl to cover.
- Cover the top of each cake with buttercream using a spatula.
- Cover cakes with poured fondant or ganache—choose between a complete coating and a partial glaze effect.
- Encase each cupcake with rolled fondant for a smooth, firm decorating surface. If you are displaying the desserts in hot temperatures, fondant will hold up better than butter cream.
- Create a swirling peak of butter cream on top of each cake—to do this use a decorating bag with a 1M star tip.

It is perfectly acceptable to use canned frosting to ice your cupcakes. However, if you would like to create your own frosting, on the following page are some basic recipes to get you started.



Cream Cheese Frosting

1 oz. package of softened cream cheese

1/4 cup softened butter

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1 bag powdered sugar (2 lb. bag)

Milk as needed

Cream together cream cheese, butter and vanilla in a bowl until smooth. Gradually add in powdered sugar and continue mixing. Add in milk as needed to get to the desired consistency.



Recipe courtesy of Becky White, GSBDC

Chocolate Butter Cream Icing

2 cups unsalted butter

12 oz. semisweet chocolate melted and cooled

3 Tbsp. milk

1 ½ tsp. pure vanilla extract

5 cups confectioner's sugar



Beat butter till smooth and creamy, 2 – 23 minutes. Mix low speed. Add chocolate until combined. Add milk, vanilla, and sugar. Mix medium speed until well combined. Do not over mix.

Recipe courtesy of Sara Lane, WV Cake Lady

Vanilla Butter Cream Icing

2 sticks unsalted butter, room temperature

6 – 8 cups confectioner's sugar

½ cup milk

1 tsp. pure vanilla extract



Cream butter 2 – 3 minutes on low speed. Add 6 cups sugar, milk, and vanilla until light and fluffy. Gradually add remaining sugar to desired consistency.

Recipe courtesy of Sara Lane, WV Cake Lady

Icing Tips

Icing Consistency

If the consistency of your icing is not right, your decorations will not be right either. Just a few drops of liquid can make a great deal of difference in your decorating results. Many factors can affect your icing consistency, such as humidity, temperature, ingredients and equipment. You may need to try using different icing consistencies when decorating to determine what works for you.

As a general guideline, if you are having trouble creating the decorations you want and you feel your icing is too thin, add a little more confectioners' sugar; if you feel your icing is too thick, add a little more liquid.



Options



Option 1: Stiff Icing

Stiff icing is used for decorations such as flowers with upright petals, like roses, carnations and sweet peas. Stiff icing also creates your figure piping and string work. If icing is not stiff enough, flower petals will droop. If icing cracks when piped out, icing is probably too stiff. Add light corn syrup to icing used for string work to give strings greater elasticity so they will not break.



Option 2: Medium Icing

Medium icing is used for decorations such as stars, borders and flowers with flat petals. If the icing is too stiff or too thin, you will not get the uniformity that characterizes these decorations. Medium to thin icing is used for icing your cupcakes. Add water or milk to your icing recipe to achieve the correct consistency.



Option 3: Thin Icing

Thin icing is used for decorations such as printing and writing, vines and leaves. Leaves will be pointier, vines will not break and writing will flow easily if you add 1-2 teaspoons light corn syrup to each cup of icing.

How to Color Icing

Color is as basic to your decorating as the icing and the cake. Choosing appropriate colors for your cupcakes will help you capture just the mood you want for the occasion.

When planning your cupcakes, think about color. Gather inspiration from the theme of your celebration. The icing colors you choose will carry that theme and personalize your decorating. Look around, notice everyday objects – from a garden in bloom, to the clothes people wear. Which colors appeal to you? Use your favorite colors in your decorating. Don't be afraid to try something different. Have fun using rich, bright colors or different color combinations. Begin by making a monochromatic cake, decorated all in white or in a single, pale color. Try using color decorations in contrast to an all-white cake background. Decorate using all pastels or all primary colors. Experimenting with color will help you decide which colors work to make your cake designs spectacular.



Icing Tips

Mixing Color in Icing

Begin with white icing and use concentrated icing color which will not affect your icing consistency. Using standard food colors can thin down your icing and affect your ability to pipe certain decorations. If you are tinting icing dark brown or black, begin with chocolate icing – your icing will not have the aftertaste that large amounts of these icing colors may produce. If you are tinting a large area red, use No-Taste Red.

Dip a toothpick into the color, then swirl it into the icing. Add color a little at a time until you achieve the shade you desire. Always use a new toothpick each time you add color; you want to avoid getting icing into your jar of color to make it last longer. Blend the icing well with a spatula.

Consider the type of icing you are using when mixing color. Icing colors intensify or darken in buttercream icing about 1-2 hours after mixing. Royal icing requires more color than buttercream icing to achieve the same color intensity.

Always mix enough of any one icing color for your entire cake. For example, if you are going to decorate a cake with pink flowers and borders, color enough icing for both. It is difficult to duplicate an exact shade of any color, an important fact if you want to keep color consistent on the cake.

Bag Striping Effects

You can easily pipe two-tone decorations just by adding a different color inside the bag before you put in your tinted icing. This way, you can pipe flowers with natural light and dark tones or a rainbow-colored clown suit to brighten up the party.



Brush Striping

Produces more intense multiple colors because it is done with straight icing color brushed into the bag. Apply one or more stripes of icing color with a decorating brush, then fill the bag with white or pastel-colored icing. As the icing is squeezed past the color, decorations will come out striped.



Spatula Striping

Produces two-tone and realistic pastel tones in flowers and figure piping. It is done with pastel-colored icing, striped inside the decorating bag with a spatula. After striping, fill the bag with white icing or another shade of the same color as the striping. Squeeze out decorations with soft contrasts.

Zip It

Convenience products like resealable bags make cupcaking so easy. Not only are they great to use in place of a piping bag, but you can also use them to get the batter in your cupcake liners without making a big mess.

How-To:

Use freezer-weight bags to be sure and keep the frosting in the bag and not all over you. Invert the bag over your hand, make a cup in the center of the bag and fill it with frosting. Pull the sides of the bag up over your hand and zip it shut. Snip a small corner from one corner of the bag, and you are ready to frost your cupcakes



Decorating Tips

Decorations for Cupcakes

Decorations for cupcakes can range from very simple to ornate. Here are some ideas:

- Sprinkle with sparkles, candy, chocolate, nuts, sweetened coconut, edible pearls .
- Use miniature marshmallows, cherries, candy canes.
- Experiment with tasty, colorful items from your local bulk food or candy store. Red Hots, Gumdrops, M&M's, Gummy Candies, Candy Hearts, Skittles; the list goes on and on. Any kind of candy you can think of. Just frost your cupcakes then carefully dip the tops in a bowl of your favorite sweet stuff. Or place the candies on top by hand.
- Create an animal face with eyes, whiskers, ears etc. using candies and licorice, etc.
- If you want something a little more unique , create your own designs for the tops of your cupcakes using fondant. Roll it out, then use cookie cutters or a sharp knife to cut out designs to place on your cupcakes. Model fondant figures to dance on top of each cake. Ready-made fondant is available in craft stores.
- Create traditional butter cream or fondant flowers.
- Decorate each cake as if it were a flower blossom such as a rose .sunflower or daisy.
- Try nuts and flakes. Try these options for decorating variety on your cupcakes to add both taste and texture. You can find many different types of coconut, from shredded to flaked, natural or toasted, to sprinkle on cupcakes. Also consider chopped nuts like pecans, walnuts or peanuts. These are a great compliment to both chocolate or spice cupcakes, especially.
- Consider edible spray paint. Edible spray paint is made essentially for baking and is sold in a variety of colors, which you can mix and match for a really professional look to your cupcakes. Try mixing it to make a freehand tie-dyed effect or spray it on using a stencil.
- Take sugar, sprinkles and coconut from your cupboard shelves and tint them vibrant colors using neon food coloring right from the grocer's shelves. One of the ways to use the tinted sugar is to coat the sticky, cut side of marshmallows to create easy flower petals for cupcake mums.



◇ How-To:

Use sanding sugar, decorating sugar, granulated sugar or coconut right from the pantry. Place the sugar in a resealable bag or snap-shut plastic container. Add a few drops of food coloring (preferably neon food colors), snap or zip the container shut and shake to create vibrant colors for decorating cupcakes. Spread the tinted sugar on a sheet of waxed paper to dry, and you are ready to decorate your cupcakes.

- Make your own crystallized flowers. Dip flower in egg white or brush with small paint brush to cover all parts of petals. Sprinkle or sift superfine sugar over petals. Cover all egg white, shaking to avoid clumping. Blow softly on flower to remove excess sugar. Place flower on foil-lined baking sheet. Let dry in cool area 2 to 3 days.
**Please check with your florist to ensure that the flowers you purchase are edible.
- Microwave chocolate chips on HIGH power in a small microwave-safe dish, 1 to 1 1/2 minutes, stirring once, until chocolate is melted. Pipe melted chocolate onto a cookie-sheet lined with Reynolds® Parchment Paper. Refrigerate until chocolate is set, about 30 minutes. Remove from refrigerator and stand chocolate shapes in frosting. If chocolate becomes too soft, refrigerate until hardened and repeat.



Display Tips

A creative cupcake display enhances even the most artfully decorated cupcake. The right display will show off stunning decorations and add pizzazz to cupcakes with simple decorations

A cupcake stand, also called a cupcake tower or a cupcake tree, is a creative, interesting way to present a collection of cupcakes for a party or special event. Cupcake stands are especially useful at occasions such as weddings, when lots of guests are present and a good appearance is important.



Though there are several varieties of cupcake stands on the market, all of them are designed to hold and display a certain number of cupcakes (usually at least 20) in a compact and decorative way.

Types of Cupcake Stands

There are two main types of cupcake stands. A basic stand is made from cake tiers or plastic or cardboard cake boards. Another type of design, frequently called a cupcake tree, has individual rings to hold each cupcake in the stand. Wilton is the most popular manufacturer of both types of cupcake stands.

Tiered Stand

Tiered cupcake stands can have as many as six or seven levels. Each tier is flat, so the cupcakes can be arranged in different ways, and you don't have to fill the tiers completely. Most tiered cupcake stands are round, but some have square tiers. If you're looking for an eye-catching stand, check out those made of cardboard, many of which have bright colors and custom designs.

To use a tiered cupcake stand, be aware of how many cupcakes the stand will hold. Overcrowding the stand with extra cupcakes won't look good and could overwhelm the stand and cause it to break or collapse. Bake and decorate your cupcakes ahead of time, and transport them and the stand separately. When you're ready to set up, place the cupcakes on each tier of the stand, starting with the bottom tier. Make sure to allow for some space between the cupcakes so that the frosting doesn't smudge and so it's easy for guests to take a single cupcake without disturbing the others.



Cupcake Tree

A cupcake tree is traditionally made of metal and has one individual holder for each cupcake. Many are more elegant looking than tiered cupcake stands, but cupcake trees hold an exact number of cupcakes and may look strange if you don't fill them up completely.

To use a cupcake tree, bake, prepare, and decorate the cupcakes ahead of time. Even though the slots in a cupcake tree may seem more secure than the platforms on a cupcake stand, it's still a good idea to transport your decorated cupcakes and cupcake tree separately to the party destination. When you arrive, place each decorated cupcake in a slot on the tree.



Display Tips

Create Your Own Stands

Rather than purchase a stand, you can create your own. Try these two easy ideas:

1. Take out several brightly colored or decorated serving bowls. Make sure they are of varying sizes and heights. Flip them upside down on your counter or table. Add a flat patter or large dinner plate in a coordinating color or theme to the top. Center the cupcakes.
2. Save a few sturdy cardboard boxes of varying heights. Place them on a small table and then cover with a tablecloth, pulling it so that the box sizes are visible. Place a glass or clear plastic platter on top of each box to hold the cupcakes.
3. Try painting terracotta or ceramic plates and pots, letting them dry, and securing them in a stack with strong glue

Here are instructions for creating your own cupcake stand that may be personalized to fit any theme. When you have all the materials ready it is very easy and quick to make. You can adapt it to the color or pattern on your cakes. Thick gift wrap paper is used to cover the cake boards.

Materials

Cake boards: 1x8", 1x10", 1x12"

Styrofoam cake dummies Each 2" high in the sizes: 2X6" and 2x7" (If you can get 4" high Styrofoam cake dummies, then you will only need 1 in each size)

Satin ribbon, enough for both cake boards and the Styrofoam cake dummies

Thick paper

Glue stick or double sided tape

Craft glue

Strong double sided carpet tape

Metal pins

A pair of scissors

A pencil

Step 1:

Start by glue the Styrofoam cake dummies together. So they can dry completely.



Step 2:

Take the satin ribbon, and fasten it on the cake dummies with a metal pin. Then wrap it tightly all the way around the cake dummies. Note: you can also glue the ribbon on the cake dummies if you like, just use a glue stick.

Step 3:

Secure the satin ribbon with a metal pin or a small piece of double sided tape. Continue with the rest of the cake dummies.

Step 4:

Place the cake boards on the paper and with the pencil draw a line around the cake boards. Cut out the paper circles with a pair of scissors.



Step 5:

Rub the glue stick all over the cake board and place the paper circles on top.

Step 6:

To attach the satin ribbon around the side of the cake boards use either a glue stick or double sided tape.

Step 7:

Now it is time to assemble the cake stand. Use strong double sided carpet tape so that the cake dummies stays in place on the cake boards.



Display Tips

Decorate Cupcake Display

After choosing your cupcake stand and arranging the cupcakes, you should consider decorating the display itself. Additional decorations will enhance the theme and look of the cupcakes.

Flowers

Flowers are an excellent choice for decorating. Commonly found on wedding cake or anniversary cake, they are also perfect additions to a cupcake display.

Place real or faux blooms every three to four cupcakes on the display. Add greenery, like leaves or even a garland, around the base of the cupcake stand(s). Some displays even have garlands and ribbons draped down the side of a stand and flowing onto the table.

Accessories

Accessories for a cupcake display go beyond flowers. Get ideas from the cupcake decorations or theme of the party.

Interspersing a few tea light candles throughout the table will help create a sophisticated or romantic look to the cupcake display. It is recommended that battery operated tea lights be used to eliminate fire hazards.

During the holidays, use typical décor, like Christmas ornaments or Easter eggs.

Pixels

Try using cupcakes as pixels in a bigger picture as in this picture.

Just as there are many ways to decorate cupcakes, there are many ways to create a stunning display of the delicious goodies. Use a stand to create height and then decorate around the stand to bring your theme together.

Check out the following websites for more ideas:

www.wilton.com

<http://cake-decorating.lovetoknow.com>

www.cakejournal.com

<http://gotcupcakes.net/>

<http://www.hellocupcakebook.com/>

<http://www.wvcakelady.com/gourmet-shoppe/>

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