

Easy Black Velvet Cake: A Simple Chocolate Dessert

This **Easy Black Velvet Cake** is the perfect simple chocolate dessert for those who crave a deep, dark, and moist cake without any fuss. Unlike its more famous “red” cousin, this cake skips the food coloring and instead gets its dramatic, dark crumb from dark cocoa powder. It is a straightforward, no-fail recipe that delivers a sophisticated and rich chocolate flavor. This cake is exceptionally moist and has a tender, velvety texture that lives up to its name. Paired with a simple buttercream or a tangy cream cheese frosting, this is the ultimate everyday chocolate cake, elevated.

The Beauty of a Simple Chocolate Dessert

What is Black Velvet Cake?

A black velvet cake is essentially a chocolate cake that emphasizes a super-dark color and a smooth, “velvety” crumb. This **Easy Black Velvet Cake** recipe achieves this by using dark cocoa powder and reacting it with buttermilk and baking soda. The result is a cake that is visually striking but also incredibly tender. It is less about novelty and more about perfecting the fundamentals of a simple chocolate dessert.

Why This Recipe is So Easy

We focus on accessible ingredients and a simple mixing process. This recipe does not require any special techniques. It uses oil instead of butter, which means no creaming is required. You simply whisk the dry ingredients in one bowl, the wet ingredients in another, and then combine them. This method is not only faster but also guarantees a moist cake that stays fresh for days.

Black velvet cake

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- Author: [Aaron recipes](#)
- Total Time: [50 minutes](#)
- Yield: [12 servings](#)

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Description

This Easy Black Velvet Cake is a simple chocolate dessert that delivers a deep, dark color and a moist, velvety crumb. Using dark cocoa powder and buttermilk, this no-fail recipe is straightforward, rich in flavor, and perfect for any occasion. It pairs beautifully with a simple cream cheese or chocolate frosting.

Ingredients

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☐ For the Easy Black Velvet Cake: 2 cups (240g) all-purpose flour 2 cups (400g) granulated sugar 3/4 cup (75g) dark cocoa powder (like Hershey's Special Dark) 2 teaspoons baking soda 1 teaspoon salt 1 cup (240ml) buttermilk, room temperature 1 cup (240ml) vegetable oil 2 large eggs, room temperature 1 teaspoon vanilla extract 1 cup (240ml) hot water For a Simple Cream Cheese Frosting: 8 ounces (226g) block cream cheese, room temperature 1/2 cup (113g) unsalted butter, room temperature 3-4 cups (360-480g) powdered sugar, sifted 1 teaspoon vanilla extract 1/4 teaspoon salt

☐ Cook Mode Prevent your screen from going dark

Instructions

1. Preheat Oven and Prep Pans: 2. Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C). Grease and flour two 9-inch round cake pans (or one 9×13 inch pan). For dark cakes, dusting with cocoa powder instead of flour is recommended. 3. 4. Whisk Dry Ingredients: 5. In a large bowl, whisk together the all-purpose flour, granulated sugar, dark cocoa powder, baking soda, and salt. 6. 7. Mix Wet Ingredients: 8. In a separate medium bowl, whisk together the buttermilk, vegetable oil, large eggs, and vanilla extract. 9. 10. Combine Batter: 11. Pour the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients and whisk until just combined. The batter will be thick. 12. 13. Add Hot Water: 14. Slowly pour the hot water into the batter, whisking gently until the batter is smooth and thin. This step blooms the cocoa and adds moisture. 15. 16. Bake the Cake: 17. Pour the batter evenly into the prepared pans. Bake for 30-35 minutes for 9-inch rounds (or 35-40 minutes for a 9×13 pan). A toothpick inserted into the center should come out clean. 18. 19. Cool Completely: 20. Let the cakes cool in their pans for 15 minutes before inverting onto a wire rack to cool completely. 21. 22. Make the Frosting: 23. In a large bowl, beat the room-temperature cream cheese and butter with an electric mixer on medium-high speed until smooth. 24. Reduce speed to low. Gradually add 3 cups of sifted powdered sugar, mixing until combined. Add the vanilla and salt. 25. Beat on medium-high for 2 minutes until fluffy. Add more powdered sugar if a stiffer frosting is desired. 26. 27. Frost the Cake: 28. Once the cake layers are completely cool, frost the cake. Store the frosted cake in the refrigerator.

Notes

Dark Cocoa: This recipe is designed for dark cocoa powder (like Hershey's Special Dark), not natural cocoa or ultra-dark black cocoa. **Thin Batter:** The batter is very thin due to the oil and hot

water. This is correct and is what creates the moist, velvet crumb. Room Temperature: Ensure your buttermilk and eggs are at room temperature for the best cake texture, and your butter/cream cheese are at room temperature for the smoothest frosting.

- Prep Time: 20 minutes
- Cook Time: 30 minutes
- Category: Dessert
- Method: Bake
- Cuisine: American

Nutrition

- **Serving Size:** 1 slice
- **Calories:** 400 kcal
- **Sugar:** 38g
- **Sodium:** 310mg
- **Fat:** 18g
- **Saturated Fat:** 6g
- **Unsaturated Fat:** 12g
- **Trans Fat:** 0g
- **Carbohydrates:** 58g
- **Fiber:** 2g
- **Protein:** 5g
- **Cholesterol:** 55mg

Did you make this recipe?

Share a photo and tag us-we can't wait to see what you've made!

Understanding Dark Cocoa Powders

Dark Cocoa vs. Black Cocoa

For this **Easy Black Velvet Cake**, we use a “dark” cocoa powder, such as Hershey’s Special Dark. This cocoa is a blend of natural and Dutch-process cocoas. It provides a deep color and a smooth, robust chocolate flavor. This is different from “black” cocoa powder, which is more intensely processed and has a specific Oreo-like taste. Using standard dark cocoa makes this recipe accessible to everyone.

The Role of Buttermilk

Buttermilk is a key ingredient for the “velvet” texture. Its acidity reacts with the baking soda for leavening, creating a light, fluffy cake. More importantly, it adds a subtle, pleasant tang that cuts through the richness of the dark chocolate. This balance is what makes the cake so complex and delicious, moving it beyond the category of a basic, sweet chocolate cake.

Mixing Your Easy Black Velvet Cake

The One-Bowl Method

This recipe can be simplified even further using a one-bowl-plus-one-bowl method. First, you whisk all the dry ingredients together in a very large bowl: flour, sugar, dark cocoa powder, baking soda, and salt. Whisking them well ensures the leavening and cocoa are evenly distributed.

Combining Wet Ingredients

In a separate, medium-sized bowl, whisk together all the wet ingredients: buttermilk, vegetable oil, eggs, and vanilla. Using oil is a key part of this simple chocolate dessert. It makes the cake incredibly moist and tender. Once combined, you pour the wet mixture into the dry ingredients and whisk until just combined. Do not overmix.

Baking to Perfection

Preparing Your Pans

This batter is versatile. You can bake it in two 9-inch round pans for a classic layer cake, or as a single-layer in a 9×13 inch pan for an even simpler dessert. Whatever pan you choose, you must prepare it well. Grease the pan with shortening or butter, then dust it with flour, or even better, with cocoa powder. Using cocoa powder prevents white, floury patches on the dark cake.

How to Check for Doneness

A dark cake can be tricky to test for doneness. You cannot see the “golden brown” edges. The most reliable method is the toothpick test. Insert a wooden toothpick or skewer into the center of the cake. When it comes out clean, or with just a few dry crumbs, the cake is finished. The cake will also feel springy to the touch.

Simple Frosting Options

Classic Cream Cheese Frosting

The traditional pairing for any velvet cake is a tangy cream cheese frosting. The bright, tangy flavor of the cream cheese provides a perfect contrast to the deep, rich flavor of the **Easy Black Velvet Cake**. The visual contrast between the dark cake and the white frosting is also stunning.

Simple Chocolate Buttercream

For a true chocolate lover’s dessert, you can pair this cake with a simple chocolate buttercream. This creates a decadent, death-by-chocolate experience. You can use the same dark cocoa powder in your frosting to maintain the deep, rich color and flavor profile.

Storage and Make-Ahead Tips

Making the Cake in Advance

This cake is an excellent make-ahead option. The oil-based crumb means the cake layers actually improve in flavor and moisture on the second day. You can bake the layers, let them cool completely, and then wrap them tightly in plastic wrap. They can be stored at room temperature for one day or frozen for up to a month.

Storing the Frosted Cake

Once the cake is frosted (especially if using cream cheese frosting), it must be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator. To ensure the best taste and texture, allow the cake to sit at room temperature for at least 30 minutes before serving. This allows the cake crumb and frosting to soften.

Frosting Pairings

Choosing Your Topping

The versatility of this **Easy Black Velvet Cake** is one of its best features. While it’s a simple chocolate dessert, the frosting can change its entire character.

Frosting Type	Flavor Profile	Best For...
Cream Cheese	Tangy & Sweet	The classic velvet experience.
Chocolate Buttercream	Rich & Decadent	A true chocoholic dessert.
Vanilla Buttercream	Sweet & Creamy	A high-contrast, classic pairing.
Simple Glaze	Light & Sweet	A simple, breakfast-style cake.

This cake is a fundamental dessert, unlike the complex layers of a [Red Velvet Strawberry Delight Cheesecake](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I use regular natural cocoa powder?

Yes, but the cake will not be “black” or “dark.” It will be a standard, lighter-brown chocolate cake. The flavor will also be slightly more acidic. The dark cocoa is recommended for the “black velvet” name.

My cake is not fluffy. What did I do wrong?

The most likely culprit is overmixing. As soon as the streaks of flour disappear from the batter, stop mixing. Overmixing develops gluten, which makes the cake tough and dense instead of soft and velvety.

Can I make this Easy Black Velvet Cake into cupcakes?

Absolutely. This recipe batter is perfect for cupcakes. It will yield approximately 24 standard-sized cupcakes. Fill the liners two-thirds full and bake at 350°F (175°C) for 18-22 minutes, or until a toothpick comes out clean.

Conclusion

This **Easy Black Velvet Cake** is the perfect recipe for when you need a reliable, impressive, and simple chocolate dessert. It proves that you do not need complicated steps or flashy food coloring to create a stunning and delicious cake. The use of dark cocoa powder and buttermilk creates an incredibly moist, tender crumb with a deep, satisfying chocolate flavor. It is a versatile cake, perfect for a birthday, a potluck, or just a Tuesday night craving. This is a recipe that will earn a permanent spot in your baking rotation.

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