

Easy Red Velvet Cake: A Simple Homemade Recipe

Baking an **Easy Red Velvet Cake** from scratch often seems intimidating, but this simple homemade recipe demystifies the entire process. Forget the boxed mixes that compromise on flavor and texture. We are crafting a classic Southern dessert known for its soft, tender crumb, mild cocoa flavor, and striking scarlet hue. This recipe focuses on simple, accessible ingredients and straightforward steps, ensuring even novice bakers can produce a show-stopping cake. This is the perfect dessert for celebrations, holidays, or simply when a craving for that iconic cream cheese frosting strikes. Get ready to master the ultimate homemade red velvet cake.

Why This Easy Red Velvet Cake Wins

Focus on Simplicity

This recipe is designed for ease. We avoid complicated techniques or obscure ingredients, focusing instead on a reliable method that yields consistent results. You do not need to be a professional pastry chef to master this simple homemade recipe. The mixing process is straightforward, relying on standard kitchen equipment.

The Perfect Flavor Balance

A true red velvet cake is not just a white cake dyed red. This recipe perfects the subtle yet crucial flavor profile. It achieves a delicate balance between the mild bitterness of cocoa powder, the tang of buttermilk, and the sweetness of the vanilla. This combination creates the signature “velvet” taste that sets this dessert apart from a standard chocolate cake.

Red Velvet Cake

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

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Description

This Easy Red Velvet Cake is a simple homemade recipe that delivers a classic Southern dessert. It features a soft, tender crumb, a mild cocoa flavor, and the iconic tangy cream cheese frosting. This recipe is straightforward, perfect for bakers of all levels, and results in a show-stopping cake for any celebration.

Ingredients

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☐ For the Red Velvet Cake: 2 1/2 cups (300g) all-purpose flour 1 1/2 cups (300g) granulated sugar 1 teaspoon baking soda 1 teaspoon salt 1 tablespoon (15g) unsweetened natural cocoa powder 1 1/2 cups (360ml) vegetable oil 1 cup (240ml) buttermilk, room temperature 2 large eggs, room temperature 1 tablespoon (15ml) red food coloring (gel preferred) 1 teaspoon white vinegar 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
For the Cream Cheese Frosting: 16 ounces (452g) block cream cheese, room temperature 1 cup (227g) unsalted butter, room temperature 4 cups (480g) powdered sugar, sifted 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract 1/4 teaspoon salt

☐ Cook Mode Prevent your screen from going dark

Instructions

1. Preheat Oven and Prep Pans: 2. Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C). Grease and flour two 9-inch round cake pans. For best results, line the bottom with parchment paper circles, then grease and flour the parchment. 3. 4. Mix Dry Ingredients: 5. In a large bowl, whisk together the all-purpose flour, granulated sugar, baking soda, salt, and cocoa powder. 6. 7. Mix Wet Ingredients: 8. In a separate medium bowl, whisk together the vegetable oil, buttermilk, large eggs, red food coloring, white vinegar, and vanilla extract until well combined. 9. 10. Combine Wet and Dry: 11. Pour the wet ingredient mixture into the dry ingredient mixture. Whisk (or use a stand mixer on low) until just combined. Do not overmix; a few small lumps are okay. 12. 13. Divide and Bake: 14. Divide the batter evenly between the two prepared 9-inch pans. Bake for 30-35 minutes, or until a wooden toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. 15. 16. Cool the Cakes: 17. Let the cake layers cool in the pans for 10-15 minutes before inverting them onto a wire rack to cool completely. Ensure cakes are 100% cool before frosting. 18. 19. Make the Frosting: 20. In a large bowl using a handheld or stand mixer, beat the room-temperature cream cheese and butter on medium-high speed until completely smooth, about 2 minutes. 21. 22. Add Sugar and Vanilla: 23. Reduce speed to low. Gradually add the sifted powdered sugar until incorporated. Add the vanilla extract and salt. 24. 25. Finish Frosting: 26. Increase the speed to medium-high and beat for 2-3 minutes until the frosting is light, fluffy, and creamy. 27. 28. Assemble the Cake: 29. Place one cake layer on a serving platter. Spread about 1 1/2 cups of frosting evenly over the top. Place the second layer on top. Apply a thin crumb coat of frosting over the top and sides of the cake. Chill for 30 minutes. 30. 31. Frost and Serve: 32. Apply the remaining frosting generously over the top and sides of the cake. Decorate with cake crumbs or sprinkles, if desired. Store in the refrigerator but serve at room temperature for best flavor.

Notes

Room Temperature Ingredients: For the smoothest batter and frosting, ensure your buttermilk, eggs, butter, and cream cheese are all at room temperature before you begin. Food Coloring: Gel food coloring provides the most vibrant red with the least amount of liquid. If using liquid coloring, you may need 1-2 tablespoons. Do Not Overmix: Mix the batter only until the wet and dry ingredients are combined. Overmixing develops gluten and leads to a dense cake.

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

Nutrition

- **Serving Size:** 1 slice
- **Calories:** 410 kcal
- **Sugar:** 35g
- **Sodium:** 300mg
- **Fat:** 20g
- **Saturated Fat:** 8g
- **Unsaturated Fat:** 12g
- **Trans Fat:** 0g
- **Carbohydrates:** 55g
- **Fiber:** 1g
- **Protein:** 5g
- **Cholesterol:** 60mg

Did you make this recipe?

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

Gathering Your Key Ingredients

The Role of Buttermilk and Vinegar

Buttermilk is non-negotiable for an authentic **Easy Red Velvet Cake**. Its acidity reacts with the baking soda, providing lift and creating an incredibly tender crumb. Furthermore, it adds a specific tang that cuts through the richness of the cake and the frosting. The small amount of white vinegar added also enhances this reaction, ensuring a light, fluffy texture.

Choosing Your Cocoa Powder

We use unsweetened natural cocoa powder, not Dutch-process. The acidity in natural cocoa powder is essential for reacting with the baking soda. This reaction, combined with the buttermilk, originally contributed to the cake's reddish-brown hue before modern food coloring. It also provides that subtle chocolate background note that defines red velvet.

Mastering the Red Velvet Batter

The Creaming Method

We begin by creaming the butter and sugar together until light and fluffy. This step is crucial, as it incorporates air into the batter, which translates directly to a lighter cake structure. Rushing this step will result in a denser, heavier crumb. You should use room-temperature butter for the best results.

Incorporating Wet and Dry Ingredients

To maintain the airy structure, we alternate adding the dry ingredients (flour, cocoa, salt) and the wet ingredients (buttermilk, vanilla). This gradual incorporation prevents the gluten in the flour from overdeveloping. Over-mixing the flour is the primary cause of a tough or dry cake. Mix only until the flour streaks just disappear.

Baking Your Simple Homemade Recipe

Preparing Your Cake Pans

Proper pan preparation prevents the cake layers from sticking, which is essential for a beautiful final presentation. You must grease the pans thoroughly with butter or shortening. Afterward, you should dust the pans with flour, tapping out any excess. For guaranteed release, many bakers also trace the pan bottoms onto parchment paper and place the circles in the greased pans.

Checking for Doneness

Bake the cakes in a preheated oven until they are done. The most reliable test for doneness is inserting a wooden toothpick into the center of the cake. If the toothpick comes out clean, or with just a few dry crumbs attached, the cake is ready. The edges of the cake will also begin to pull away slightly from the sides of the pan.

The Iconic Cream Cheese Frosting

Achieving the Right Consistency

The hallmark of an **Easy Red Velvet Cake** is its tangy, smooth cream cheese frosting. The secret to a non-runny frosting is using full-fat, brick-style cream cheese, not the spreadable tub variety. Both your butter and your cream cheese must be at room temperature, but not warm or melted, to ensure they combine smoothly without becoming greasy.

Mixing the Perfect Frosting

Start by beating the cream cheese and butter together until completely smooth and free of lumps. Then, gradually add the sifted powdered sugar. Sifting the sugar is a vital step to prevent a lumpy frosting. Finally, add the vanilla extract and a pinch of salt. The salt is crucial for balancing the sweetness and enhancing the tangy flavor of the cream cheese.

Assembling and Storing Your Cake

Layering and Crumb Coating

Before you begin, ensure your cake layers are completely cool. A warm cake will melt the frosting instantly. Level the cakes with a serrated knife if they have domed tops. Apply a thin, sparse layer of frosting over the entire cake. This “crumb coat” traps any loose crumbs. Chill the cake for 30 minutes before applying the final, generous layer of frosting.

Make-Ahead and Storage

This cake stores beautifully. You can bake the cake layers a day in advance. Once cool, wrap them tightly in plastic wrap and store them at room temperature. A fully frosted cake should be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator due to the cream cheese frosting. For the best flavor and texture, however, allow the cake to sit at room temperature for 20-30 minutes before serving.

Timing Your Red Velvet Creation

Preparing Your Timeline

Baking this **Easy Red Velvet Cake** is a multi-step process, but you can break it down easily. The batter itself comes together in about 20 minutes. The baking takes around 30 minutes, and the cooling process, which is critical, takes at least one hour. You can make the frosting while the cakes cool.

A Simple Baking Schedule

Here is a sample schedule to help you plan. This data is essential for managing your kitchen time effectively.

Task	Estimated Time	Notes
Ingredient Prep	10 minutes	Bring eggs, butter, buttermilk to room temp.
Mixing Batter	20 minutes	Includes creaming butter and sugar.
Baking	30-35 minutes	Varies slightly by oven.
Cooling Layers	1-2 hours	Must be completely cool before frosting.
Making Frosting	10 minutes	Do this while cakes are cooling.
Assembly	20 minutes	Includes crumb coat and final frosting.

This timeline ensures your **Easy Red Velvet Cake** is ready for dessert without a last-minute rush. If you are looking for a dessert with fruit flavors, you might also enjoy this [Red Velvet Strawberry Delight Cheesecake](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I use liquid food coloring instead of gel?

Yes, but you will need significantly more. Gel food coloring is highly concentrated, so you only need about 1 teaspoon. For liquid coloring, you may need 1-2 full tablespoons (or more) to achieve a vibrant red, which can slightly alter the batter's consistency.

My cake turned out dense. What went wrong?

The most common causes of a dense red velvet cake are over-mixing the batter after adding the flour, or not creaming the butter and sugar sufficiently at the start. Both actions fail to incorporate or maintain the air needed for a light texture.

Why does my cream cheese frosting taste too sweet?

This recipe balances sweetness with tangy cream cheese and a pinch of salt. If it tastes too sweet, ensure you used full-fat block cream cheese (not spreadable) and added the pinch of salt, which is essential for cutting the confectioner's sugar.

Conclusion

This **Easy Red Velvet Cake** proves that elegant, classic desserts are achievable in any home kitchen. By following these simple steps, focusing on the right ingredients like buttermilk and natural cocoa, and respecting the techniques, you create a dessert that is so much more than its color. The tender, velvety crumb and the tangy-sweet cream cheese frosting come together in perfect harmony. This simple homemade recipe is destined to become your go-to for celebrations, impressing friends and family with a truly iconic American dessert.