

Moist Red Velvet Cake: The Ultimate Easy Buttermilk Recipe

If you are searching for a truly **Moist Red Velvet Cake**, the secret lies in one essential ingredient: buttermilk. This easy buttermilk recipe guarantees a dessert that is incredibly tender, rich in flavor, and avoids the dry, crumbly texture that plagues so many others. Red velvet is a distinctive cake, characterized by its soft “velvet” crumb, a hint of cocoa, and a signature tangy finish that pairs perfectly with sweet cream cheese frosting. This recipe focuses on maximizing moisture and flavor, using the acidic power of buttermilk to create a truly superior cake. Prepare to bake the best, most moist red velvet cake you have ever tasted.

The Secret to a Truly Moist Red Velvet Cake

Why Buttermilk is Essential

Buttermilk is the undisputed star of this easy buttermilk recipe. Its high acidity serves three crucial purposes. First, it activates the baking soda, providing significant lift and a light, airy texture. Second, its acid breaks down gluten strands in the flour, resulting in a finer, more tender crumb. Finally, it provides that classic, subtle tang that is the hallmark of an authentic **Moist Red Velvet Cake**.

Oil vs. Butter for Moisture

While many cakes rely on butter for flavor, this recipe uses oil. Butter contains water and milk solids, which can create a slightly denser texture. Oil, however, is 100% fat, which coats the flour particles and inhibits gluten formation, resulting in a supremely moist and tender cake. This also ensures the cake stays moist for several days, unlike butter-based cakes which can dry out quickly in the refrigerator.

Red Velvet Buttermilk Cake Recipe

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- Author: [Aaron recipes](#)
- Total Time: [1 hour](#)
- Yield: [16 servings](#)

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Description

This Moist Red Velvet Cake is the ultimate easy buttermilk recipe. It guarantees an incredibly tender, soft crumb thanks to the combination of buttermilk and oil. This recipe delivers the classic tangy flavor with a hint of cocoa, paired perfectly with a smooth, tangy cream cheese frosting. It's designed to be flavorful and stay moist for days.

Ingredients

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☐ For the Cake: 2 1/2 cups (275g) cake flour 1 1/2 cups (300g) granulated sugar 1 teaspoon baking soda 1 teaspoon salt 1 tablespoon (15g) natural unsweetened cocoa powder 1 1/2 cups (360ml) vegetable oil 1 cup (240ml) buttermilk, room temperature 2 large eggs, room temperature 1 to 2 teaspoons (5-10ml) red gel food coloring 1 teaspoon white vinegar 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
For the Cream Cheese Frosting: 16 ounces (452g) block-style 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 oven to 350°F (175°C). Grease two 9-inch round cake pans, line the bottoms with parchment paper, and grease the parchment. Flour the pans, tapping out excess. 3. 4. Sift Dry Ingredients: 5. In a large bowl, sift together the cake flour, granulated sugar, baking soda, salt, and natural cocoa powder. Whisk to combine. 6. 7. Mix Wet Ingredients: 8. In a separate medium bowl, whisk together the vegetable oil, room-temperature buttermilk, room-temperature large eggs, red gel food coloring, white vinegar, and vanilla extract. 9. 10. Combine Batter: 11. Pour the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients. Mix on low speed (or whisk by hand) until just combined. Do not overmix; stop as soon as the flour streaks disappear. 12. 13. Bake the Layers: 14. Pour the batter evenly into the two prepared pans. Bake for 30-35 minutes. Test for doneness by inserting a toothpick into the center; it should come out clean. 15. 16. Cool Completely: 17. Allow the cakes to cool in the pans on a wire rack for 15 minutes. Then, invert the cakes onto the wire rack, remove the parchment paper, and let them cool completely to room temperature. 18. 19. Start the Frosting: 20. In a large bowl with an electric mixer, beat the room-temperature cream cheese and butter on medium-high speed until light and completely smooth (about 2-3 minutes). 21. 22. Add Sugar and Finish: 23. Reduce speed to low. Sift the powdered sugar directly into the bowl in 2-3 additions, mixing until just combined. Add the vanilla extract and salt. 24. 25. Beat Until Fluffy: 26. Increase speed to medium-high and beat the frosting for 2-3 minutes until it is very creamy and fluffy. 27. 28. Assemble the Cake: 29. Place one cooled cake layer on your serving plate. Top with a generous layer of frosting. Add the second cake layer, top-side down, to create a flat surface. 30. 31. Crumb Coat and Chill: 32. Apply a very thin layer of frosting over the top and sides of the cake to trap crumbs. Refrigerate the cake for 30 minutes. 33.

34. Final Frosting:35. Frost the top and sides of the chilled cake with the remaining frosting. Store the cake in an airtight container in the refrigerator.

Notes

Cake Flour vs. All-Purpose: Cake flour is highly recommended for the “velvet” texture. If you must use all-purpose flour, remove 2 tablespoons from each cup and replace it with 2 tablespoons of cornstarch.
Room Temperature Ingredients: This is critical for both the cake (buttermilk, eggs) and the frosting (butter, cream cheese) to ensure a smooth, emulsified, and non-lumpy result.
Do Not Overbake: Overbaking is the fastest way to a dry cake. Start checking for doneness at the 30-minute mark.

- Prep Time: 25 minutes
- Cook Time: 35 minutes
- Category: Dessert
- Method: Bake
- Cuisine: Southern American

Nutrition

- **Serving Size:** 1 slice
- **Calories:** 430 kcal
- **Sugar:** 40g
- **Sodium:** 320mg
- **Fat:** 22g
- **Saturated Fat:** 9g
- **Unsaturated Fat:** 13g
- **Trans Fat:** 0g
- **Carbohydrates:** 60g
- **Fiber:** 1.2g
- **Protein:** 4g
- **Cholesterol:** 55mg

Did you make this recipe?

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Key Ingredients for This Easy Buttermilk Recipe

Choosing Your Flour

For the most tender **Moist Red Velvet Cake**, we recommend using cake flour. Cake flour is milled from softer wheat and has a lower protein content than all-purpose flour. Less protein means less gluten development, which directly translates to a softer, more delicate, and “velvety” texture. If you

only have all-purpose flour, you can still achieve excellent results, but the crumb may be slightly less fine.

The Right Kind of Cocoa

This recipe calls for natural unsweetened cocoa powder. Do not use Dutch-process cocoa. The natural acidity of regular cocoa powder is necessary to react with the baking soda and buttermilk. This reaction notes only provides leavening but also contributes to the cake's classic flavor profile. The amount of cocoa is small, just enough to provide a hint of chocolate flavor, not overwhelm it.

Perfecting the Batter Mixing Technique

Avoiding Over-Mixing

The number one rule for a **Moist Red Velvet Cake** is to avoid over-mixing the batter. Once you combine the wet and dry ingredients, mix only until the flour streaks have disappeared. Mixing beyond this point develops the gluten in the flour, which leads to a tough, rubbery, or dense cake. A few small lumps in the batter are perfectly acceptable.

The Vinegar and Baking Soda Reaction

This easy buttermilk recipe includes a small amount of white vinegar. This added acidity gives the baking soda an extra boost, creating a chemical reaction that produces carbon dioxide. This process, combined with the buttermilk, ensures the cake rises beautifully in the oven, resulting in a light and fluffy structure that enhances the moist texture.

Baking and Cooling Your Cake

Oven Temperature and Pan Prep

A properly calibrated oven is crucial. Bake this cake in a preheated 350°F (175°C) oven. Ensure your pans are well-prepared; grease them thoroughly, line the bottoms with parchment paper, and grease the parchment. This guarantees your delicate cake layers will release from the pans without tearing, which is vital for a beautiful layered presentation.

The Importance of Cooling

You must allow the cake layers to cool completely before frosting. Attempting to frost a warm cake is a recipe for disaster. The heat will melt the cream cheese frosting, creating a slipping, sliding mess. Let the layers cool in the pans for about 15 minutes before inverting them onto a wire rack to finish cooling to room temperature, which usually takes at least one hour.

The Ultimate Cream Cheese Frosting

Room Temperature Ingredients are Key

For a smooth, lump-free cream cheese frosting, your block-style cream cheese and unsalted butter must both be at room temperature. If they are too cold, they will not combine properly and will leave

small, hard lumps. If they are too warm or melted, your frosting will be greasy and runny.

Sift Your Powdered Sugar

This step may seem fussy, but it is the secret to a perfectly smooth frosting. Powdered sugar is prone to clumping, and those clumps will not break down easily when beaten. Sifting the powdered sugar ensures it incorporates flawlessly into the butter and cream cheese mixture, resulting in a silky, professional-quality frosting for your **Moist Red Velvet Cake**.

Assembling Your Masterpiece

Leveling Your Cake Layers

For a professional-looking cake, it is important to level your layers. Cakes often bake with a slight dome on top. Use a long, serrated knife to carefully slice off the domed top, creating a flat, even surface. This allows the layers to stack securely without wobbling. You can save these trimmings to crumble over the finished cake for decoration.

The Crumb Coat

A crumb coat is a thin layer of frosting applied to the entire cake before the final, decorative layer. This thin coat traps all the loose crumbs, preventing them from mixing into your beautiful white frosting. After applying the crumb coat, chill the cake in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes to set the frosting. This makes applying the final layer clean and easy.

Ingredient Substitutions and Tips

Making Your Own Buttermilk

If you do not have store-bought buttermilk, you can easily make a substitute for this **Moist Red Velvet Cake** recipe. For every 1 cup of buttermilk required, measure 1 tablespoon of white vinegar or lemon juice into a liquid measuring cup. Then, add enough regular milk (whole milk is best) to reach the 1-cup line. Let it sit for 5-10 minutes; it will thicken and sour slightly.

Flour Substitution Details

As mentioned, cake flour is preferred, but all-purpose flour works. If you want to get closer to the texture of cake flour using all-purpose, use this trick: For every 1 cup of all-purpose flour, remove 2 tablespoons, and replace those 2 tablespoons with cornstarch. Sift this mixture together a few times before using.

Ingredient	Preferred Type	Acceptable Substitute	Impact of Substitute
Flour	Cake Flour	All-Purpose Flour	Slightly denser, less tender crumb.
Fat	Vegetable Oil	Melted Coconut Oil	A very faint coconut flavor may be present.
Milk	Buttermilk	Milk + Vinegar/Lemon Juice	Works perfectly, flavor is nearly identical.

Ingredient	Preferred Type	Acceptable Substitute	Impact of Substitute
Cocoa	Natural Cocoa	Dutch-Process Cocoa	Not Recommended. Will not react properly.

This recipe is a showstopper, but if you're looking for another complex dessert, consider this layered [Red Velvet Strawberry Delight Cheesecake](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

Why did my red velvet cake turn out brown, not red?

This can happen if you used Dutch-process cocoa instead of natural cocoa. Dutch-process cocoa is alkalized, which neutralizes the acid needed for the red color (and the leavening) to work properly. Also, ensure you are using a quality, concentrated red food coloring.

Can I bake this Moist Red Velvet Cake in a 9×13 pan?

Yes, this easy buttermilk recipe adapts well. Pour the batter into a greased and floured 9×13 inch pan. The baking time will be slightly longer, typically 35-45 minutes. Check for doneness with a toothpick.

How do I store this cake to keep it moist?

Because of the cream cheese frosting, the cake must be stored in the refrigerator. Keep it in an airtight cake carrier or cover it well. To ensure it stays moist and tastes best, let it sit at room temperature for 30 minutes before serving.

Conclusion

This **Moist Red Velvet Cake** recipe is a game-changer, proving that “moist” and “red velvet” belong in the same sentence. The strategic use of buttermilk and oil, combined with the correct mixing techniques, results in a cake that is exceptionally tender, flavorful, and a true delight to eat. This easy buttermilk recipe demystifies the process, empowering you to create a bakery-quality dessert at home. This is more than just a cake; it is an experience, and it is destined to become your one and only red velvet recipe.
