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*Baking: A Beginner's Guide  
to Baking Classic Desserts*



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# *Baking secrets*

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This are the tips and tools of the trade that recipes don't tell you. This information will help any beginner bake like an expert.



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## Tools;

### Mixer/whisk

A mixer is mechanical and automated device that spins a set of beaters into any kind of batter or mixture. Mixing is essential to baking as it combines the different ingredients into one product and evenly distributes the different flavors. This machine enables you to mesh solid ingredients together but more importantly liquid and solid substances that form a semi liquid that you later shape into you're the desert/ food of your choice. Mixing is the foundational procedure in baking and being able to do so efficiently and effectively is important. Depending on the recipe you could possibly mix your ingredients with a spoon. But that requires a lot of strength, technique and patience. A task such as mixing by hand can take up to 45 vs 15 min with a mixer.



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## Measuring cup and spoons

Measuring cups are cups with markings on the surface indicating volume and weight. Measuring spoons are spoons with markings on the outside that indicate volumes as well. Measuring spoons usually come in the measuring unit of teaspoon or table spoon. While measuring cups come with  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}$ , 1 cup markings. These items are crucial to baking properly. Most dessert recipes come with exact measurements and being off can mess up the entire dish. Having measuring cups and spoons are essential to getting the right amount of water, sugar butter and other ingredient the recipe calls for.



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## Baking sheets

Baking sheets are sheets of metal that are used for placing and baking a variety of pastries in the oven. Usually baking sheets are used for small pastries and foods that are baked in large quantity such as cookies, scones, garlic bread. Baking sheets are just a basic tool to have in a baker's kitchen because many recipes will use this. Baking sheets enable that the heat from the oven is evenly disturbed and every cookie or scone is getting right amount of heat. This way, in the end none of the pastries are burnt or too soft .



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## Mixing bowls

you can not mix without some kind of bowl. The rounded vessel holds and contains voluminous foods. The shape enables its contents to be turned, mixed and even tossed. A durable and well made mixing bowl allows for easy stirring and easy cleaning. Out of the tools this is the most basic but are indispensable when baking.



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## Oven

The most essential baking tool of them all. without a working oven you will have a very difficult time baking especially as a beginner. the oven provides evenly distributed heat all around not just the bottom of the sheet. an oven's door seals the heat inside so it constantly maintains the same temperature the whole time. Because of its heating capabilities it bakes anything faster than any stove top or any other method.



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## Ingredients

**Flour:** flour is the most basic ingredient in any baking mixture. The starch and gluten in flour is what permits flour to become a strong and flexible when mixed with water. The starch, gluten and protein content in the flour is what gives the dessert its shape, volume, appearance and what holds in the moisture.

Being that protein and gluten content is what makes flour so important knowing the varying ratio of protein in different flour brands are is will make the difference.

Cake flour: low protein content, creates very soft and light cakes

**Bread flour:** high protein content used majority for breads, creates thick volume and density

**All purpose flour:** medium protein content, recommend by most professionals can be used for almost anything; can make creations soft but also retains its shape with decent volume.





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## Eggs

Eggs are another staple to baking recipes. they create stability in a mixing batter, thickens the batter and adds moisture. the fat content in the egg adds a richer flavor and it binds liquids and fats together so adding eggs helps with the even distribution and combining of ingredients.

When your following a recipe and it calls for eggs use large chicken eggs. Majority of u.s. recipes are meant to use large eggs .

Another thing you want to consider when choosing eggs is the grade they are labeled with. most eggs come with grades like; aa,bb, etc. AA being the best in quality.

Lastly when it comes to actually using the eggs you wasn't them at room temperature. So before adding eggs to your baking mixture , you want to take out of your fridge and let it sit in warm water for a few minutes . room temperature eggs mix better and have an effect of the rise and texture on your end product.



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## **Butter**

Butter plays many roles in baking. Adding butter adds texture by aerating the mixture. Butter also adds flavor and thickens the mixture. A bonding agent to help combine things like sugar to the flour.

You do not want to substitute butter with margarine or shortening. Margarine and shortening are butter imitations lacking in quality, they are not equivalent and will have a huge effect on your creation.

You want to use room temperature butter. The optimal temperature for your butter is 65 degrees. So before using the butter remove from fridge and leave it out for 30 min. if you are short on time you want cut up the butter into small pieces and if you a paddle attachment for your mixer it is good to use as well.

professionals would recommend to use unsalted butter. using unsalted butter helps you control the salt content in your mix. If you use salted butter its best not add any other salt in your mix being its drastically effect the flavor. But the best is to use unsalted butter and add any salt the recipe ask for your self .



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## Milk

Milk is used to improve texture and how it feels when eating the baked product. The protein in milk also gives a soft crumb structure in cakes, and is a factor to the moisture, color and flavor of a baked product. Cakes that contain milk also tend to stay fresh longer.

When using milk you want it to be a room temperature. so remove from fridge for approx. 30 min.

For most recipes you want to use whole milk. whole milk has a protein content of 3% anything lower than that will have you baked product ruined,



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**Yeast-** is a type of fungus, that when activated, consumes the sugars in flour and releases carbon dioxide as waste. This process is what causes the bake product to rise. Yeast has a slow rise rate and is mostly used baking bread.

**Baking soda-** is also a rising agent. It will react with a liquid, acidic ingredient to produce carbon dioxide. Because the reaction is so fast, foods made with baking soda must be cooked immediately after mixing.

**Baking powder-** is essentially baking soda mixed with a starch and powdered acid. Baking powder releases carbon dioxide into the mix through a chemical reaction which causes the product to rise. It does this when mix with a liquid and when heated making it double acting. baking powder works faster than yeast and leave a fermentation taste after

**Sugar-** sugar is what give baked products its sweetness. sugar acts as food for yeast baked products and helps in the aeration process. using regular white sugar is recommend especially for beginners since it is easier to mix and dissolve into your mixture.

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## **Procedure techniques**

### **Preparing baking dishes and pans**

rub your baking pans with butter. do not be Afraid to do so generously. this prevents your dessert from sticking to the pan and burning or crisping to much at the bottom. you also want to sprinkle some flour and shake the pan a bit.

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## **Cracking eggs**

Gently but firmly tap the middle of the egg on the edge of a bowl to crack the shell.

Hold the egg over the bowl and pull the shell halves apart, letting the egg fall into the bowl.



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## **Beating butter and sugar**

Pour the butter and sugar in a bowl. The butter should be room temperature for best results. Use an electric mixer and set it to medium speed. Mix until creamy. Stop every few minutes or so to scrape the sides of the bowl and continue mixing.



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## **Pre heat**

Before placing your baking sheet in the oven Pre heat at least 15 min prior .

To check if your creation is finished cooking sticking a tooth pick in the middle and pulling it out , if it comes out clean that is a good indication that it is fully cooked through .

Then let cool.







# *French Macrons*





## History

The French Macaron a beloved pastry is thought to be one of the hardest desserts to make. It is often confused with its counterpart the Macaroon, which is made with coconut and spelled with two O's. With a disputed history, both versions have ties that can be traced all the way to Italy. The name is derived from the Italian word Macarone; a flourless cookie made with almond paste the Italians would call *Amaretti*.

The French Macaron pronounced (mah-kah-ROHN) is a meringue sandwich cookie made with almonds, egg whites, confectioners' and granulated sugars. Today the filling can be made from a ganache butter-cream, meringue or jam.

In 1553, the French court was introduced to this pastry by the

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King's Italian wife Catherine de Medici. De Medici's chefs would make Macarons a staple in French court, and the pastry would later grow in popularity.

In the early 1900s, Pierre Desfontaines Ladurée, owner of the famous Ladurée pâtisserie in Paris, would change the macaron from a single layered of filing to a double layered ganache filing making the Macaron what it is today.

Today the French Macarons varies in all sorts of colors and fillings. Traditional flavors include Chocolate, Coconut, Peanut, Pistachio, Raspberry, and Vanilla Bean. The French Macarons continues to be a favorite dessert many love to indulge in.

## **TOOLS**

- 1) Food processor
- 2) Kitchen Aid
- 3) Mixing bowls
- 4) Parchment paper
- 5) Pastry Bag
- 6) Spatula
- 7) Scale
- 8) Sheet pan
- 9) Sieve (fine)
- 10) Silpat (macaroon baking mat)
- 11) 3/8" round pastry tip
- 12) Whisk



## **Procedure**

Be sure to weigh the ingredients precisely, and follow the step-by-step directions to make meringue, fold in the almond mixture.

Preparation: 30 mins Total Time: 2 hours

Yield: Makes 20 to 25 sandwich cookies

## Ingredients

Egg Whites  
Ground & confectioners' Sugar  
Food Coloring  
Ground almonds



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1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees with rack in lower third. Place almonds in a food processor; process until as fine as possible, about 1 minute. Add confectioners' sugar; process until combined, about 1 minute.
  2. Pass almond mixture through a fine-mesh sieve. Transfer solids in sieve to food processor; grind and sift again, pressing down on clumps. Repeat until less than 2 tablespoons of solids remains in sieve.
  3. Whisk egg whites and granulated sugar by hand to combine. Beat on medium speed (4 on a KitchenAid) 2 minutes. Increase speed to medium-high (6) and beat 2 minutes. Then beat on high (8) 2 minutes more.
  4. The beaten egg whites will hold stiff, glossy peaks when you lift the whisk out of the bowl. Add flavoring and food coloring, if desired, and beat on highest speed 30 seconds.
  5. Add dry ingredients all at once. Fold with a spatula from bottom of bowl upward, then press flat side of spatula firmly through middle of mixture. Repeat just until batter flows like lava, 35 to 40 complete strokes.
  6. Rest a pastry bag fitted with a 3/8-inch round tip (Ateco #804) inside a glass. Transfer batter to bag; secure top. Dab some batter remaining in bowl onto corners of 2 heavy baking sheets; line with parchment. Notes: Do not use liquid food coloring, it will change the consistency of the macaron
  7. With piping tip 1/2 inch above sheet, pipe batter into a 3/4-inch round, then swirl tip off to one side. Repeat, spacing rounds 1 inch apart. Tap sheets firmly against counter 2 or 3 times to release air bubbles.
  8. Bake 1 sheet at a time, rotating halfway through, until risen and just set, 13 minutes. Let cool. Pipe or spread filling on flat sides of half of cookies; top with remaining half. Wrap in plastic and refrigerate.





*Red velvet Cheese cake*



## History

There is no original location known for the creation of the red velvet cake but two locations do claim that they were the original creators. During World War 2, food was scarce (specifically sugar and butter) therefore bakers started to add beets or beet juice to their cakes.

The beets acted as fillers and kept the cakes moist, whereas the red from the beet juice made the cakes more appealing to the eye. Not soon after, the beets were switched out for red food coloring, although some red velvet recipes still call for beets. The Adams Extract company attributes itself to making the first red velvet cake in the 1920`s. Likewise, The Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York City still claims that it is the birthplace of the original red velvet cake with it being a popular menu item in the 1950`s. Others believe that the red velvet cake started in the south but there is no clear original location established. In recent years, the red velvet cake has been changed or updated to nearly different forms such as red velvet cupcakes, red velvet cake rolls, red velvet cheesecake, and so many more delicious desserts that we have come to love. The red velvet cake has a history unlike many other desserts and it continues to be a unique dessert that is unlike any that we have ever known.

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## Ingredients

- 1 ½ cups chocolate graham cracker crumbs
- ¼ cup butter, melted
- 1 tablespoon granulated sugar
- 3 (8-ounce) packages cream cheese, softened
- 1 ½ cup granulated sugar
- 4 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 3 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa
- 1 cup sour cream
- ½ cup whole buttermilk
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon distilled white vinegar
- 2 (1-ounce) bottles red food coloring
- 1 (3-ounce) package cream cheese, softened
- ¼ cup butter, softened
- 2 cups powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Garnish: Fresh mint sprigs

## Tools

- 1 9- inch spring-form pan
- 2 Electric mixer
- 3 Bowl
- 4 Knife
- 5 Oven
- 6 Wire Rack

## Recipe

Stir together 1 ½ cups graham cracker crumbs, ¼ cup melted butter, and 1 tablespoon granulated sugar



Press mixture into bottom of a 9-inch spring-form pan.



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Beat 3 (8-ounce) packages cream cheese and 1 ½ cups granulated sugar at medium-low speed with an electric mixer for 1 minute.





Add the 4 beaten eggs and the next 6 ingredients (3 table-  
spoons unsweetened cocoa, 1 cup sour cream,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup whole  
buttermilk, 2 teaspoons vanilla extract, 1 teaspoon distilled  
white vinegar, 2 (1-ounce) bottles red food coloring,) mixing on  
low speed just until fully combined.



Pour batter into prepared crust.



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Bake at 325° for 10 minutes; reduce heat to 300°, and bake for 1 hour and 15 minutes or until center is firm. Run knife along outer edge of cheesecake. Turn oven off. Let cheesecake stand in oven 30 minutes.



Remove cheesecake from oven; cool in pan on a wire rack for 30 minutes. Cover and chill for 8 hours.





Beat 1 (3-ounce) package cream cheese and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup butter at medium speed with an electric mixer until smooth; gradually add 2 cups powdered sugar and 1 teaspoon of vanilla extract, beating until smooth. Spread evenly over top of cheesecake. Remove sides of spring-form pan.



Garnish, if desired.

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CHAPTER 4

*cupcakes*



## History

Cupcakes are a sweet, baked treat that many have indulged in at one time or another. It was only a few years ago that cupcakes had become all the rage but it seems very few know that they date back to 1796! Found in “American Cookery”, Amelia Simmons, the recipe’s author, refers to these treats as “a cake to be baked in small cups”. The cups that were used at the time were called ramekins, teacups and even cans. Miniature cakes baked in these containers were also called “1-2-3-4 Cakes” or Quarter Cakes. These mnemonic titles assisted with recalling the recipe’s ingredients which included four basic ingredients: butter, sugar, flour and eggs; however, the term “cupcake” was not, formally, used until Eliza Leslie’s “Seventy-five Receipts for Pastry, Cakes and Sweetmeats” in 1828.

## Present Day



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The cupcake as we know it today is small, sweet cake that come in a widevariety of flavors. They are, usually, lined with a cupcake liner and topped with icing. The icing, also known as frosting, is used to enhance the cake's appearance, taste and texture with its sweet and creamy texture with ingredients that can often include any of the following: sugar, water, milk, butter, egg whites and cream cheese.

Cupcakes are used to celebrate special occasions: birthdays, weddings, baby showers, graduations, promotions, et al. Whether it be finally getting all members to work together on the group project or completing another semester bringing you one step closer to graduation, there will always be an occasion to celebrate. So let there be cake! Or in this case, chocolate cupcakes!

## **Chocolate Cupcakes Recipe & Directions**

This recipe is the gold standard when it comes to classic cupcakes.

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Total Time: 1 hour

Yield: Makes 12 cupcakes



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## **Ingredients**

3/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder

3/4 cup all-purpose flour

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

1/4 teaspoon salt

3/4 cup (1 1/2 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature

1 cup sugar

3 large eggs

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1/2 cup sour cream

Sprinkles (optional)

Easy white icing

## **Directions**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line 12-cup standard muffin tin with paper liners.

Into a medium bowl, sift together cocoa, flour, baking powder, and salt; set aside. In a mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each, then beat in vanilla. With mixer on low speed, add flour mixture in two batches, alternating with sour cream and beginning and ending with flour.

Pour batter into cups, filling each 3/4 full. Bake until a toothpick inserted in centers comes out clean, 20 to 25 minutes.

Cool in pan 5 minutes; transfer to a wire rack to cool completely, then spread with Easy White Icing using a table knife or small offset spatula. Decorate with sprinkles, if desired.

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## Easy White Icing Recipe & Directions

This simple recipe yields a foolproof icing for cakes and cupcakes.

Yield: Makes 3 ½ cups, Enough for 12 standard cupcakes

Ingredients – Icing

1 1/2 sticks unsalted butter, softened

1 pound (3 2/3 cups) confectioners' sugar

1 to 2 tablespoons milk (optional)

Directions – Icing

In a mixing bowl, cream butter until smooth.

Gradually add confectioners' sugar; beat until smooth. If too thick to spread, beat in 1 to 2 tablespoons milk.





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