

Chapter 44

Cakes, Cookies and Candies

Frostings

Directions: Read the following selection. Then answer the questions under *Thinking Critically*, and complete the activities as directed by your teacher.

The expression “frosting on the cake” is a fitting way to describe something special added to an already enjoyable occasion. Because frostings can enhance the taste and appearance of cakes, it’s easy to see how the expression came to pass.

Favorite Frostings

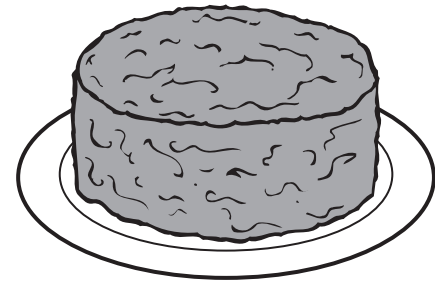
The decorative drizzle on coffee cakes and cinnamon rolls is called a flat icing, a runny mixture of powdered sugar and a liquid, which is usually water or milk. Because milk has little or no fat, some bakers add cream or honey to help prevent the frosting from forming a crust and turning brittle.

Richer and fluffier, butter-cream frosting is made with powdered sugar, solid fat, milk or cream, and flavoring. The amount of fat depends on the consistency desired. Two tablespoons of fat per cup of powdered sugar is a basic ratio. A higher proportion of fat makes a creamier frosting.

The type of fat also affects the frosting. For example, shortening makes a creamy, white frosting. It adds no flavor but may give frosting a greasy texture. Butter or margarine adds a yellow tint and buttery flavor. Added flavorings include extracts, orange or lemon rind, and unsweetened cocoa powder.

Frosting known as seven-minute, or sea foam, frosting takes longer than seven minutes to make. Granulated sugar, egg whites, cream of tartar or corn syrup, and water are placed in a double boiler over boiling water and beaten until soft peaks form, usually in about seven minutes. The mixture is then removed from the heat, flavoring is added, and beating continues until the mixture achieves a glossy consistency.

Rosebuds and other decorative flourishes are often fashioned from frosting known as ornamental frosting, which is made with powdered sugar, water, and egg whites. The whites give the frosting a firm structure when dried.



Frosting a Cake

A few basic steps can help you frost a layer cake. Start with completely cooled layers. If the cake is very tender, freeze the layers and then frost. To combat crumbs, trap them in a thin glaze of powdered sugar and water, and allow the icing to dry before frosting the cake.

Arrange four overlapping strips of waxed paper in a circle around the edge of a cake plate. These will help keep the plate clean while you work.

Place one cake layer upside down on the plate, centered on the waxed paper. Use a spatula with a flexible, metal blade to spread one-fourth of the frosting on the layer, almost to the edge. Watch the amount carefully to make sure you save enough frosting for the rest of the cake.

Place the second layer, right-side up, on top of the first. Spread a very thin layer of frosting on the sides of the cake to seal in crumbs. Add more frosting with upward strokes. Bring the frosting up past the top edge for an attractively shaped cake.

Spread the frosting over the top layer to the edge. Make decorative peaks, swirls, or scallops, or leave the top smooth and decorate with candy sprinkles, chocolate curls, tinted coconut, chopped nuts, or contrasting icing. Carefully slide the waxed paper out from beneath the edges of the cake to serve.

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Thinking Critically

1. Aside from easier preparation and less time, what other factors would you consider when deciding whether to make chocolate chip cookies from a recipe, from a convenience mix, or from refrigerated dough?

2. Which ingredients are frequently added to cakes or cookies that give them greater nutritive value? Determine which ingredients add more nutritive value. Would you be more likely to use recipes with more nutritive value when making dessert items? Why or why not?

3. Brainstorm three to five variations on a recipe for white cake.

4. Review two or three tips you want to remember when frosting a cake.

For Further Study

- ◆ Interview a baker or bakery owner. Ask him or her about the frostings used for different types of cakes, cookies, or brownies; the differences between commercial frostings and homemade frostings; any special tips for frosting cakes; and the time and preparation needed for frosting special-occasion cakes, such as birthday, graduation, or wedding cakes. Summarize your findings and share them with the class.
- ◆ Develop a leaflet or tri-fold brochure listing problems and solutions to frequently asked questions (FAQs) on making cooked frostings. Possible questions may include: How can you get cooked frosting to be the right consistency? How can you keep a cooked frosting from burning on the range top? How can a candy thermometer be used when preparing cooked frostings? Solicit questions from other students or adults to complete your leaflet.