

Red Velvet Cake

Ingredients:

Cake:

Flour — 340 g
Cocoa Powder — 5 g
Sugar — 300 g
Baking Powder — 5 g
Baking Soda — 3 g
Salt — ¼ tsp
Eggs — 3 pcs (medium size)
Vegetable Oil — 250 g
Buttermilk (Full-fat Kefir) — 280 g
Red water-soluble food coloring — up to the saturated color

Cream:

Softened Butter 82% — 345 g
Powdered Sugar — 300 g
Cold Cream Cheese — 1000g
Vanilla/Vanilla extract (optional)

Inventory:

Mixing Bowl
Pastry Scale
Silicone Spatula
Mixer
Baking Pans/Springform Pan (18 cm)
Parchment Paper/Silicone Mat/Teflon Mat
Foil
Cooling Rack
Tall Glass/Measuring Cup
Piping Bag
Offset Spatula
Cake Board
Acetate Film
Rotating Cake Stand

Process:

1. Start by weighing an empty deep bowl where you'll mix the ingredients. There's a purpose behind this, which I'll explain

shortly. Also, take the butter from the refrigerator in advance; It needs to thaw out and bask in room temperature glory for our frosting later on.

2. For the **sponge cake**, combine all the dry ingredients in the bowl: 340 g of flour, 5 g of cocoa powder, 300 g of sugar, 5 g of baking powder, 3 g of baking soda, and a pinch of salt (about $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp).
3. Then add three eggs and 250 ml of odorless vegetable oil to the bowl. Gently mix with a spatula.
4. Next, add 280 ml of buttermilk or kefir and the red water-soluble food coloring. Whether you opt for gel or powdered coloring is up to you – both work like a charm!
5. Mix gently with the spatula before firing up the mixer to avoid splashing.
6. Blend the batter until it's velvety smooth, then set it aside for 20 minutes. This time allows the dairy component to mingle with the baking powder and soda, creating a chemical reaction that enhances the texture and flavor of the cake.
7. Preheat the oven to 170C or 338F and prepare the baking pan: grease it with butter and lightly dust with flour. This is called "French lining." If you're using a springform pan, line its bottom with parchment paper or a silicone/teflon mat. Or, wrap the bottom with foil for added security.
8. So, why go through the trouble of weighing an empty bowl? Well, by weighing it first and then with the batter, a bit of basic math reveals the weight of our batter. Divide this figure by three, and voila! You've got the weight of each sponge cake. This ensures uniformity in size, resulting in a visually stunning presentation when sliced.
9. Place the ring on a baking sheet and carefully pour the batter into the molds, using a spatula to assist if needed. If you're using a single mold, cover the remaining batter with plastic wrap, ensuring it's in contact with the surface.
10. Cover the top of the mold with foil before placing it in the oven to ensure an even rise of the batter. Bake the sponge cakes for around 20 minutes. After the first 10 minutes, remove the foil to encourage browning. Since ovens are all different, remember to check the cake's doneness with a wooden skewer or toothpick.
11. Once the sponge cakes are baked, take them out of the oven and let them cool on a wire rack for a bit. Next, carefully remove them from the molds, allowing them to cool entirely. Rinse the molds with cold water and repeat the "French lining" process. Flip the sponge cakes upside down on the wire rack to ensure an even surface. Once fully cooled, wrap each sponge cake in plastic wrap and pop them into the fridge for at least 2 hours. This little chill session stabilizes them beautifully for the next step.

12. While the other sponge cakes are baking away, let's prepare the **cream cheese frosting**. Thoroughly beat 345 grams of softened butter using a mixer. Why softened butter, you may wonder? Only in this softened state, not liquid, will it achieve that lusciously fluffy texture we're aiming for.
13. Add 300 grams of powdered sugar. Before continuing to beat with the mixer, gently fold the mixture with a silicone spatula to prevent the powdered sugar from flying up.
14. Once the mixture is uniform, add 1000 grams of cold cream cheese. Beat a little more. Scrape down the sides of the bowl with the spatula and mix everything well once again.
15. Place the pastry bag inside a tall glass and fill it with the frosting. Twist the end of the pastry bag and secure it tightly to prevent any frosting from leaking out. If the cakes are not ready for assembly yet, store the frosting in the refrigerator.
16. **Cake assembly.** Gather all your essentials: 3 sponge cakes, frosting, a turntable, a cake ring, a cake board, and an offset spatula. Cover the turntable with a dry cloth or paper towel to keep the cake board from slipping. Set the cake board on top, then position the cake ring and line its inner diameter with acetate sheets. Snip the tip of the pastry bag filled with frosting.
17. Spread a thin layer of frosting over the cake board. Next, carefully position the first sponge cake layer, ensuring its smooth side is facing up, inside the cake ring, and gently press it down. Proceed to apply frosting in a spiral pattern, gradually working towards the center. Use a silicone spatula to smooth out the layer evenly. Repeat this process with the remaining sponge cake layers.
18. Apply a thin layer of frosting to the top sponge cake, smoothing it out with a spatula or offset spatula. Wipe down the cake board. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate, along with the cake ring, for half an hour.
19. **Crumb coat:** Place the cake on a turntable, and remove the plastic wrap, cake ring, and acetate sheets. With a pastry bag, delicately spread a thin layer of frosting around the cake's sides, slowly rotating the turntable. Smooth the frosting with a spatula, ensuring all uneven areas are covered. The crumb coat prevents cake crumbs from mixing into the outer layer. Chill the cake for an additional thirty minutes, and refrigerate any excess frosting.
20. **Final coat:** Similar to the rough coating process, apply a thicker layer of cream onto the cake, beginning from the bottom and working upwards. Reserve a bit of frosting on the top to ensure a seamless finish, angling the spatula at 90 degrees for precision.
21. Use the spatula to meticulously even out the cake's surface, applying gentle pressure to avoid displacing the cream from the cake. Maintain the cake's vertical position to prevent any tilting.

Smooth out any uneven areas by gently spreading a bit of cream into the indentations and reapplying the spatula. If the temperature in the room is warm, periodically return the cake to the refrigerator to prevent the frosting from melting. Once you're satisfied with the result, your cake is ready!

22. **Storage:** Store the cake in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.