



Best Vanilla Cake



Author: [Sally](#) Prep Time: 35 minutes Cook Time: 25 minutes

Total Time: 4 hours (includes cooling) Yield: 12-14 servings

*With its outstanding vanilla flavor, pillowy soft crumb, and creamy vanilla buttercream, this is truly the best vanilla cake I've ever had. Make sure you read through the recipe and recipe notes before beginning. This recipe yields approximately **8 cups of batter** which is helpful if you need this batter for different [cake pan sizes and conversions](#).*

Ingredients

3 and 2/3 cups (433g) **cake flour** ([spooned & leveled](#))
1 teaspoon **salt**
2 teaspoons **baking powder**
3/4 teaspoon **baking soda**
1 and 1/2 cups (340g) **unsalted butter**, [softened to room temperature](#)
2 cups (400g) **granulated sugar**
3 large **eggs** + 2 additional **egg whites**, at room temperature*
1 Tablespoon **pure vanilla extract** (yes, Tbsp!)
1 and 1/2 cups (360ml) **buttermilk**, at room temperature*

Vanilla Buttercream

1 and 1/2 cups (340g) **unsalted butter**, [softened to room temperature](#)
5 and 1/2 cups (650g) **confectioners' sugar**
1/3 cup (80ml) **whole milk** or **heavy cream**
1 and 1/2 teaspoons **pure vanilla extract**
1/8 teaspoon **salt**

Instructions

- 1 Preheat oven to 350°F (177°C). Grease three [9-inch cake pans](#), line with parchment paper rounds, then grease the parchment paper. Parchment paper helps the cakes seamlessly release from the pans. (If it's helpful, see this [parchment paper rounds for cakes](#) video & post.)
- 2 **Make the cake:** Whisk the cake flour, salt, baking powder, and baking soda together. Set aside.
- 3 Using a handheld or stand mixer fitted with a paddle or whisk attachment, beat the butter and sugar together on high speed until smooth and creamy, about 3 minutes. Scrape down

- the sides and up the bottom of the bowl with a silicone spatula as needed. Beat in the 3 eggs, 2 egg whites, and vanilla extract on high speed until combined, about 2 minutes. (Mixture will look curdled as a result of the egg liquid and solid butter combining.) Scrape down the sides and up the bottom of the bowl as needed. With the mixer on low speed, add the dry ingredients just until combined. With the mixer still running on low, pour in the buttermilk and mix just until combined. You may need to whisk it all by hand to make sure there are no lumps at the bottom of the bowl. The batter will be slightly thick.
- 4 Pour batter evenly into cake pans. [Weigh them](#) to ensure accuracy, if desired. Bake for around 23-26 minutes or until the cakes are baked through. To test for doneness, insert a toothpick into the center of the cake. If it comes out clean, it's done. Allow cakes to cool completely in the pans set on a wire cooling rack. The cakes must be completely cool before frosting and assembling.
 - 5 **Make the frosting:** In a large bowl using a handheld mixer or stand mixer fitted with a whisk or paddle attachment, beat the butter on medium speed until creamy, about 2 minutes. Add confectioners' sugar, milk, vanilla extract, and salt with the mixer running on low. Increase to high speed and beat for 2 minutes. Add more confectioners' sugar if frosting is too thin, more milk if frosting is too thick, or an extra pinch of salt if frosting is too sweet.
 - 6 **Assemble and decorate:** Using a large serrated knife, slice a thin layer off the tops of the cakes to create a flat surface. Discard (or crumble over ice cream!). Place 1 cake layer on your cake stand, [cake turntable](#), or serving plate. Evenly cover the top with about 1 and 1/2 cups of frosting. Top with 2nd cake layer and evenly cover the top with about 1 and 1/2 cups of frosting. Top with the third cake layer. Spread the remaining frosting all over the top and sides. I use and recommend an [icing spatula](#) to apply the frosting.
 - 7 Refrigerate cake for at least 1 hour before slicing. This helps the cake hold its shape when cutting.
 - 8 Cover leftover cake tightly and store in the refrigerator for up to 5 days.

Notes

- 1 **Make Ahead & Freezing Instructions:** The cake layers can be baked, cooled, and covered tightly at room temperature overnight. Likewise, the frosting can be prepared then covered and refrigerated overnight. Let the frosting sit at room temperature to slightly soften for 10 minutes before assembling and frosting. Frosted cake or unfrosted cake layers can be frozen up to 2-3 months. Thaw overnight in the refrigerator and bring to room temperature before decorating/serving. See [how to freeze cakes](#) for detailed instructions.
- 2 **Special Tools** (affiliate links): [9-inch Round Cake Pans](#) | [Glass Mixing Bowl](#) | [Whisk](#) | Electric Mixer ([Handheld](#) or [Stand](#)) | [Silicone Spatula](#) | [Kitchen Scale](#) (optional) | [Cooling Rack](#) | [Large Icing Spatula](#) | [Cake Turntable](#) | [Bench Scraper](#) | [Cake Carrier](#) (for storing and transporting)
- 3 **9×13-inch Cake:** I recommend using my [white cake](#) batter instead. Both use similar ingredients and produce a deliciously light vanilla cake. See recipe notes for the 9×13 inch version.
- 4 **2 Layer Cake:** I recommend using my [2 layer white cake](#) batter instead. Both use similar ingredients and produce a deliciously light vanilla cake.

- 5 **Bundt Cake:** This vanilla cake batter will fit into a 10-12 cup or larger Bundt pan. I'm unsure of the exact bake time (likely around an hour), but use a toothpick to test for doneness. Same oven temperature.
- 6 **Cupcakes:** Fill cupcake liners 2/3 full. Bake at 350°F (177°C) for 19-21 minutes. Yields about 3 dozen. Or try my [vanilla cupcakes](#) recipe.
- 7 **Cake Flour:** To prevent a dry-tasting cake, make sure you are spooning and leveling the flour or weighing it. For the best results, I strongly recommend cake flour. You can find it in the baking aisle and I have [many more recipes](#) using it. Usually a homemade [cake flour substitute](#) works, but this recipe uses far too much cake flour and the **homemade substitute is not ideal**.
- 8 **Eggs:** 3 whole eggs provide structure, moisture, and richness. 2 extra egg whites keep the cake light and airy. I don't recommend using 4 whole eggs; stick to the 3 egg & 2 egg white combination. Here are recipes using leftover [egg yolks](#).
- 9 **Buttermilk:** If you don't have buttermilk, you can make a DIY [buttermilk substitute](#). Add 2 teaspoons of white vinegar or lemon juice to a liquid measuring cup. Then add enough whole milk to the same measuring cup until it reaches 1 and 1/2 cups. (In a pinch, lower fat or nondairy milks work for this soured milk, but the cake won't taste as moist or rich.) Stir it around and let sit for 5 minutes. The homemade "buttermilk" will be somewhat curdled and ready to use in the recipe.
- 10 **Why is everything at room temperature?** All refrigerated items should be at room temperature so the batter mixes together easily and evenly. Read more about why [room temperature ingredients](#) are important.
- 11 **Want chocolate frosting instead?** I recommend the recipe/amount of chocolate frosting I use for [Piñata Cake](#).
- 12 **Sprinkle Cake:** To make a sprinkle cake, fold about 3/4 cup (135g) of sprinkles into the cake batter. Avoid nonpareils (the little balls), which tend to bleed their color. Or try this [confetti birthday cake](#), which is quite similar to this recipe.

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