

Crusting Cream Cheese Buttercream

SERVES 1 , 4-5 cups

Ingredients:

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1/2 cup vegetable shortening
- 1 lb cream cheese, softened
- 1 tablespoon clear vanilla extract
- 3 1/2 lbs sifted confectioners' sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt



Method:

1. Cream butter, shortening, cream cheese and extracts. Gradually add confectioner's sugar and salt. Beat on low speed until nice and creamy. If you want whiter icing, try to use butter without dyes available at most health food stores.
2. This recipe is for a stiff consistency. For a thinner consistency, use 3 pounds of powdered sugar instead.
3. If you want a very smooth cake, let the cake sit for 15 minutes after icing (longer for a thinner icing). Then using your spatula or fondant smoothing tool (this works best) and smooth it with a plain, non-patterned Viva paper towel. To do this, take your paper towel and lay it on your icing (after it crusts) and lightly rub over the paper towel with your hand, spatula or fondant smoothing tool to get a smooth surface. If the icing sticks to the paper towel, you didn't let it "crust" long enough or the room is warm. Stick it in the fridge for 20 minutes or so to let it "crust" then try again. If you let it dry too long it will get harder to achieve the smooth look.
4. This recipe will ice, fill and decorate an 8" double layer cake with icing left over which I usually put in a plastic bag, label with the date and freeze. Very handy when I have cupcakes I want to ice quickly!

When a buttercream is called "crusting" it means that it dries out and hardens enough to be smoothed with a paper towel and/or your smoothing tool. It doesn't get as hard as royal icing but hard enough to handle. If your room is warm or the icing starts to get sticky you can pop the cake back in the refrigerator or freezer for a few minutes until it firms up again. If you like the look of fondant but not the taste this can be smoothed to achieve the same visual appeal.

Happy baking, Colleen :-)