Layer Cake Academy

American buttercream

At a glance

Filling and finishing

Beginner

Status : The owner confirmed the review on 11 October 2026. Adapt the guidance to your equipment, ingredients and working conditions.

Test this teaching recipe in your own kitchen. Results may vary.

632 g with 25 g of milk; about 622 to 637 g according to adjustment (15 to 30 g of milk). Two fine trims and a simple finish of the 15 cm project.

Preparation time : 20 min

Reference diameter : 15 cm

Ingredients

Unsalted butter : 200 g — Soft but not melted

Icing sugar : 400 g — Sifted

Pasteurised whole milk : 25 g — Start with 15 grams; add no more than 15 grams if necessary, and note this on the test sheet.

Vanilla extract : 5 g

Fine salt : 2 g — Dissolve in the milk.

Equipment

Kitchen scales

Hand mixer or stand mixer with paddle attachment

Sieve

Flexible spatula

Bowl

Texture and use

Dense, sweet and soft. It's a little bit of a work-off, but it's still ivory. Form a light surface crust with air.

Very sweet, with butter and vanilla notes.

Good to cold, softens to heat; does not guarantee holding a cake in a hot car.

Beginners, border poaching and rosaceans, sugar paste underlay, children's cakes.

Baking

No oven needed.

The timing depends on the consistency of the butter and the equipment used. Do not melt the butter completely.

Step 1 — Soften the butter

Work the butter for 3 to 5 minutes until smooth and paler. It should yield to the spatula while still holding its shape. Oily or melted butter is unsuitable.

Step 2 — Add the sugar

Add the icing sugar in several batches on low speed to keep it from flying out of the bowl. Scrape the sides and bottom between additions.

Step 3 — Add the flavouring

Add the vanilla and 15 g of milk with the salt dissolved in it. Mix until evenly combined, then check the texture.

Step 4 — Adjust

Add the reserved milk 5 g at a time. Stop when the buttercream spreads without tearing the cake and holds on the spatula. Note the total weight of milk added.

Step 5 — Finish gently

Mix on low speed or with a flexible spatula for 3 to 5 minutes to remove large air bubbles. Before applying the crumb coat, set aside a clean portion for the final coat.

What to watch for

Reduce bubbles.

Dose the liquid.

Troubleshooting

Granular cream. — Unsieged sugar or butter too cold. — Tam, work butter longer.

Smoothing bubbles. — Beats at high speed. — Finish at slow speed or at flexible spatula.

Storage

Cover, date and refrigerate. At home, check that the refrigerator zone is at most 4 °C. Prepare close to use. The shelf life of this formulation has not been established. Whipping, assembling or delivering it does not restart the clock. The finished cake must meet the limits of every component and any shorter limit introduced by assembly.

Freeze at -18 °C only under a suitable tested procedure. Label and date the container. Thaw in the refrigerator as directed and check texture and storage history. No frozen shelf life has been established for this formulation.

Allergens

Milk

The chocolate variation may contain soy, depending on the chocolate used

Check the vanilla and icing sugar for possible traces

Variations

Chocolate: add 60 g of cooled molten black chocolate.

Less sweet: replace 100 g of icing sugar with 100 g of fresh cheese (see cream cheese frosting) — compulsory cold storage.