

[Home](#) / [Discover](#) / [Kitchen](#) / [How to Bake the Perfect Cake](#)

HOW TO BAKE THE PERFECT CAKE

Who doesn't love cake?! Is there any other dessert that can take on as many flavors, shapes and forms? Chocolate, lemon coconut, orange-cranberry, blueberry-lavender; round, square, loaf, Bundt; birthday, anniversary, graduation and, my favorite of all, just-because cake! Check out my list of tips below to make the most out of your cake-baking escapades.

All-Purpose or Cake Flour? Sure all-purpose our, as the name suggests, is just that – a great all-around wheat our useful for most cake recipes. But if you want to take your creation to the next level, try switching to cake our. It has a lower level of gluten (a protein that creates structure in baked goods) compared to all-purpose our, so it yields a much softer, more tender crumb. If you want to give cake our a whirl, try making your own. Measure 1 cup (150g) of all-purpose our, remove 2 tablespoons of the our and replace it with 2 tablespoons of cornstarch. If using a scale, measure out 122g of our and add 28g of cornstarch for a total of 1 cup (150g).

Baking with Whole-Grain Flours? I adore the taste of whole-grain ours such as whole wheat or spelt in baked goods. The problem? These whole-grain beauties can absorb more water than their all-purpose counterpart. If you've ever eaten a slice of whole-wheat bread that tastes like sawdust, lack of fat and liquid is probably to blame. You can substitute whole-wheat or spelt our for all-purpose in any cake recipe; however, a slight increase in both fat content and liquid ingredients will make for a cake that isn't quite as dry when baked.

Butter or Oil? I have a baking motto I've been teaching my 4-year-old: everything's better with butter. Everything except, ahem, cake. Don't get me wrong. I am a butter-sale stalker! I see those blocks in the yer and I load up my freezer. But the thing is that oil makes an extra-moist cake that stays moist even after storage on the counter for a few days. For cake baking, I usually reach for vegetable or canola oil. Dear butter: I'm sorry, I love you, but oil wins this round.

Double the Vanilla. I started doubling the amount of vanilla extract in my baked treats a few years ago and have never looked back. I'm talking up to 1 full tablespoon in one cake! I can't explain why, because I don't have a solid reason other than it just tastes good. Try it and you'll see.

The Baking Process

Does Shape Matter? I say no. Most standard cake recipes can be baked in your choice of these four pans: 8" (20cm) round, 8" (20cm) square, 9" (23cm) Bundt or a standard loaf tin. I personally love the look of a loaf cake. They slice beautifully and look so pretty placed on a plate. The only difference? A loaf cake takes longer to bake. While it's in the oven, watch for a golden color, the sides of the loaf to pull away from the tin, and a top that springs back gently when touched with your fingertip.

A loaf cake ready to go into the oven to bake.

Metal and Glass Versus Silicone. Of course, metal and glass are old-school baking favorites, but have you ever tried to scrub the corners of a metal baking tin? And what if you don't want the rounded inner edges of a glass baking pan? Enter the silicone cake pan. Practically indestructible, silicone pans don't rust or shatter, they are easy to clean and the squared-off cake edges they yield are ruler sharp! The downside? Cooling baked cakes in a silicone pan can result in a soggy bottom, and nobody wants that. If baking in silicone, remove your baked goods from the pan after cooling for 10 minutes on a wire rack.

Take an Internal Temperature. I once tried to make a Pinterest-perfect banana bread with a halved banana draped over the top like a waxing crescent moon. I removed the bread from the oven and it was beautiful – just perfect! I returned to the kitchen 20 minutes later and wondered where the banana half went? I'll tell you where. That cheeky rascal had sunk to the bottom of my doughy, under-baked loaf. I said to myself "never again" and because of the following tip, it hasn't happened again. If you're ever unsure that a cake has finished baking in the middle, remove it from the oven and take an internal temperature using a digital thermometer. A reading of 200°F – 205°F (93°C – 96°C) is what you are looking for in a fully baked cake. This technique hasn't failed me yet! Just cover the holes from the thermometer with frosting, and no one will ever be the wiser.

The Finishing Touches

Cool Completely Before Decorating. This tip is short and sweet (no pun intended). Let your cake(s) cool for at least 3 – 4 hours before decorating. Trust me, there's nothing worse than delicious, decadent cream cheese frosting sliding off of a warm cake!

Use a Cake Soak. One of my favorite ways to keep cakes moist is to use a cake soak! All you need is a liquid of your choice and a pastry brush. Once your baked cake has cooled, gently brush the liquid over the top using 2 tablespoons – 1/4 cup of liquid per layer. Three of my favorite cake soaks are flavored simple syrups, alcohol (such as dark rum or Irish cream) or a simple mixture of milk and vanilla extract.

To Glaze or to Frost? I love frosting as much as the next person, but sometimes I don't want that thick layer of extra sweetness. This is where a simple powdered icing comes in! My best tip for making an icing glaze for cakes is to add liquid (such as milk or orange juice) to powdered sugar, 1/2 teaspoon at a time, stirring well between additions. Adding this small amount of liquid at a time gives you perfect control over how thin or thick your icing will be. Sometimes you want a thinner icing for drizzling and sometimes you need a thicker mixture that will slowly drip over the sides of a cake.

Glazing the baked loaf cake.

For recipe inspiration, check out this [easy one-bowl lemon buttermilk cake](#) made with melted butter, or my family's favorite cake recipe [spiced carrot cake with pineapple](#)! Regardless of flavor, shape or occasion, one thing I'm pretty sure of is that cake is kind of the best. Happy baking!