

Easy Vanilla Cupcakes

Yield: 24 cupcakes

Ingredients:

- 1 cup (250 mL) unsalted butter, softened
- 2 cups (500 mL) granulated sugar
- 4 eggs
- 2 tsp (10 mL) vanilla
- 3 cups (750 mL) all-purpose flour
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) baking powder
- 1/2 tsp (2 mL) salt
- 1-2/3 cups (400 mL) milk

Preparation:

1. Add butter and sugar to a bowl; beat until fluffy.
2. Beat in eggs, 1 at a time.
3. Beat in vanilla.
4. Whisk together flour, baking powder and salt; stir into butter mixture alternately with milk, making 3 additions of dry ingredients and 2 of milk.
5. Spoon into paper-lined or greased muffin cups.
6. Bake in 350°F (180°C) oven until cake tester inserted in centre comes out clean, 20 to 22 minutes.
7. Remove from pan; let cool on rack. (*Make-ahead: Store in airtight container for up to 24 hours.*)

The Six Different Cake Mixing Methods

Creaming Method

This is the most common of the methods. The creaming method alternately adds the dry and liquid ingredients to the fat mixture. This ensures all the liquid will be absorbed into the batter as if there is a high amount of butter or shortening, the liquid has a natural tendency to separate and the flour will help bind it into the batter.

Two-Stage Method

This method is great for cakes with a large amount of sugar and the resulting batter is generally thinner than other types. The dry ingredients are mixed with the fat, then the liquid is added in parts. Low speed is always used in the procedure, and frequent scraping is necessary.

Flour-Batter Method

This produces a finely grained cake. The flour and fat ingredients are mixed until smooth, and the sugar and eggs are whipped together. Then the two different mixtures are incorporated, and the liquid is added at the end.

Sponge Method

Sponge cakes use egg yolks and or whole eggs that are whipped with sugar until a very thick foam is created. Heating the eggs or yolks with the sugar will result in greater volume. A typical genoise cake will use this method, and the egg foams are the typically the only leavening.

Angel Food Cake Method

As the name implies, this is the method for creating angel food cakes. These cakes use no fat, and are leavened with whipped egg whites.

Chiffon Method

Chiffon-style cakes can use an egg white foam, but are not fat-free, and some recipes call for additional eggs or yolks inside the batter. Additional melted butter or a vegetable oil is added to the mix for richness, and the leavening isn't solely relied upon by egg foams; they do contain chemical leavenings such as baking powder.