



Grains of truth about CAKES

Definitions

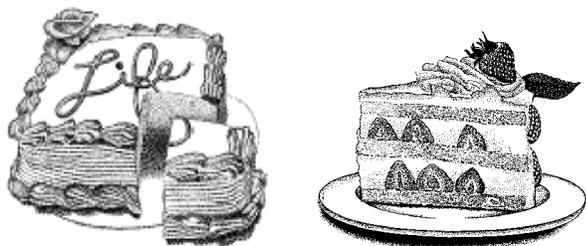
Cakes are one of America's favorite desserts and a time-honored way to celebrate special occasions, from weddings to birthdays. Technically, cakes are a sweet foodstuff prepared by baking a wheat flour-based dough or batter into a compact form.

There are two basic cake types: those made with fats and those containing little or no fats. Butter cakes, also called creamed cakes, contain butter, margarine or vegetable shortening, which contribute to a finely textured, tender and moist cake. Cakes that do not contain fat, such as sponge, angel food and chiffon cakes, are often referred to as foam cakes. These have a larger proportion of egg than butter cakes.

Both butter cakes and foam cakes lend themselves to limitless variations, depending on the flavorings added to the basic ingredients, the shapes of the pans used in baking, and fillings, icings and decorations used. Cakes come in all sizes and shapes, from layer cakes to jelly rolls to miniature cakes and cupcakes. There are cakes for every taste and every occasion, whether an elegant gateau or a down-to-earth carrot cake.

Ingredients

The basic ingredients in cake making—flour, fat, eggs, sugar, liquid and leavening—must be carefully and accurately balanced to achieve successful results. A large variety of ingredients are used to give cakes flavor and character, in addition to the basics. These include fruits, spices, nuts, chocolate and more.



Flours: Cake flour, a fine, silky flour milled from soft wheats, is preferred by bakers for cake making. Cake flour has low protein and soft gluten strength, which allows it to blend easily into the batter and to absorb and retain moisture. It is especially suitable for foam cakes because it folds easily into the egg-rich batters. Cake flour results in a tender cake with a fine grain texture. All-purpose flour, milled from a mixture of hard and soft wheats, is suitable when a heavier, dense cake is desired.

Eggs: Foam cakes, such as sponge, angel food and chiffon cakes, rely on eggs for volume. Depending on the recipe, the whole egg, only the yolk, or only the white is whipped to incorporate air and produce a light, fluffy batter and cake. The flavor of the cake will be affected by whether the egg yolk or egg white is used, and what other flavorings are added.

Sugar: Granulated sugar, the most commonly used sweetener for cakes, assists in creaming and whipping, and contributes to the texture of the cake. In some recipes, brown sugar, molasses, honey or corn syrup may be used as a sweetener.

Fat: Fat in the form of butter, shortening or vegetable oil, imparts flavor and richness to the cake, while providing aeration for the leavening agent. When the fat is creamed with the sugar, tiny bubbles are incorporated into the batter. The bubbles enlarge during baking, with the help of a leavening agent such as baking powder. The result is a light, finely textured cake.

Preparation

Ingredient proportions, mixing methods and baking directions vary from recipe to recipe, according to the type of cake being made. To achieve the desired results, it is important to follow the instructions and procedures carefully. Measure ingredients accurately, and combine in sequence stated in the recipe.

Preheat the oven and, if possible check the temperature with an oven thermometer. To test for doneness, a toothpick inserted in the center should come out clean.

There are nearly as many types of cake pans as there are types of cakes to bake in them. The most commonly used cake pans are round, square or rectangle, plus angel food tins with funnels, baking sheets for jelly rolls, ring molds and paper liners and small molds for cupcakes and miniature cakes.

Fillings, icings and glazes are the finishing touches on cakes and provide flavor and eye appeal. Fillings—which can include flavored whipped creams, jams, puddings and buttercreams—usually complement the cake and frosting. Frostings and toppings can be as varied as a flat, shiny glaze; a rich, fluffy buttercream; whipped cream; low-fat whipped toppings; or a simple dusting of powdered sugar.

Storage

Unfrosted layer cakes, pound cakes and fruit cakes can be stored at room temperature for several days when tightly wrapped in a layer of plastic wrap and a layer of aluminum foil. For longer periods, store in the freezer, wrapped as described, and labeled and dated.

Cakes frosted with buttercream can be stored in a cake preserver for a few hours and in the refrigerator for longer periods. Refrigerate cakes with pastry cream fillings or whipped cream frostings immediately. To freeze cakes with buttercream, pastry cream or whipped cream, chill uncovered until firm, then wrap in plastic wrap and foil. Unwrap and defrost in the refrigerator.

Do not refrigerate cakes with egg white frostings. Store in a cake preserver and serve within a few hours.

Nutritional value (cakes listed according to ingredients used.)

ONE PIECE	WEIGHT (ounces)	CALORIES	CARBOHYDRATES (gm)	PROTEIN (gm)	FAT (gm)
White w/Icing	2.5	266	45.0	2.3	9.0
Sponge	2.3	196	36.0	5.0	3.8
Chocolate w/Icing	2.4	235	40.0	3.0	8.0
Carrot w/Cream Cheese Frosting	4.0	406	52.0	4.0	21.0
Pound Cake	1.0	101	15.0	2.0	5.4
Angel Food	2.0	145	33.0	4.0	0.0
Yellow w/Icing	2.4	235	40.0	2.8	7.8

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