

MARY BERRY'S RED VELVET CAKE

Get red-dy for Red Nose Day with an impressive but easy red velvet cake from the baking queen Dame Mary Berry. It's so simple, even a complete beginner can knock it together.

Preparation time: 30 mins to 1 hour

Cooking time: 25 to 30 mins

Serves: 8

Suitable for vegetarians

INGREDIENTS

For the red velvet cake

- Butter, for greasing
- 250g/9oz plain flour
- 1 tbsp cocoa powder
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 250g/9oz light muscovado sugar
- 200ml/½ pint buttermilk
- 150ml/¼ pint sunflower oil
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tbsp red food colouring gel or about ¼ tsp food colouring paste
- 2 large free-range eggs
- 8 white chocolate truffle balls, to decorate

For the buttercream icing

- 250g/9oz butter, softened
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 300g/10½oz icing sugar
- 250g/9oz full-fat mascarpone



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RED
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DAY

FRIDAY 21 MARCH

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 180C/160C Fan/Gas 4. Grease two 20cm/8in sandwich tins and line the bases with baking paper.
2. Measure the flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda and sugar into a bowl and mix well.
3. Mix the buttermilk, oil, vanilla, food colouring and 100ml/3½fl oz water in a jug. Add the eggs and whisk until smooth. Pour the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients and whisk until combined. The mixture should be bright red; it will get a little darker as it cooks. If it's not as vivid as you'd like, add a touch more colouring.
4. Divide the mixture evenly between the two prepared tins and level the surfaces. Bake for about 25–30 minutes, or until well risen and shrinking away from the sides of the tins. Cool in the tins for 10 minutes, then turn out, peel off the paper and leave to cool completely on a wire rack.
5. To make the buttercream icing, place the soft butter and vanilla extract in a large bowl and sift in half the icing sugar. Mix with an electric whisk until smooth. Sift in the remaining icing sugar and mix again. Add the mascarpone to the bowl and gently stir with a spatula (don't beat with a whisk as it may split). Put a fluted nozzle in a piping bag and spoon about 150g/5½oz of the buttercream into the bag.
6. To assemble the cake, sit one of the sponges on a cake plate and spread one-third of the buttercream over the cake, then sit the other cake on top. Ice the cake by first spreading a thin layer of icing – a crumb coat – over the whole cake before chilling for 30 minutes.
7. Pile the remaining icing from the bowl on top and spread it with a palette knife over the top and around the edges to completely cover the cake. Make sure that the icing is smooth around the edges before starting to create lines up the sides. Make wide lines up the sides and swirl the top.
8. Use the reserved buttercream in the piping bag to pipe a rope design around the edge of the top of the cake. To do this, start at the edge of the cake and pipe continuous swirls of icing overlapping each swirl as you pipe around the edge of the cake. Decorate with the chocolate truffles to finish.

TOP TIPS

- Use a professional food colouring paste, if you can, as a natural liquid colouring won't work and may even turn the sponge green.
- The sponges can be made up to 3 days ahead and will stay moist if wrapped in cling film or eco wrap. You can freeze the cakes un-iced.
- To make your Chocolate Truffle 'Noses' Red, coat the chocolate balls in red edible glitter or luster.

For cake labels, bunting and more go to comicroelief.com/fundraising

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