

# Top Five Buttercream Recipes

*And Your Buttercream Questions Answered*



There are so many types of buttercream to choose from it can get confusing to figure out which one is best for what situation and type of cake. So I am sharing the 5 that I have come to rely on over the years. Italian meringue has always been my number one go to recipe as the taste and texture of it is perfect for wedding cakes. I also use the American version quite often as it can be made very quickly and used in almost every situation. Included is a bonus number six recipe which is the best buttercream to pipe beautiful flowers with. You can do so much with buttercream frosting. It is the base for a variety of fillings as you can flavor it in endless ways and it acts as glue to hold cake layers together. I hope you enjoy these recipes and find them useful and delicious.

Happy Baking and Cake Decorating!

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## American Buttercream



If you like easy and super sweet than this is the one for you. Kids tend to like this buttercream better than the others in general. You can use this for everything from filling and frosting to piping borders and decorations. It takes less time than the others and tends to be firmer for piping.

You can adjust the sugar amount to your preference.

- 1/2 cup of butter
- 3 3/4 cups confectioners sugar
- 3-4 Tbs milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Whip up the butter until it is as white and fluffy as possible. Add the sugar and vanilla continue mixing at a medium speed.

Makes enough to fill and frost a 2 layer cake or a 13 x 9 x 2 sheet cake or 24 cupcakes.  
This is the easiest frosting to make!

## Crusting Buttercream



Crusting buttercream is very popular for making a firmer and smoother surface to decorate your cakes. It is a term that I had not heard of until I started building my “Wedding Cakes For You” website and hearing what other cake decorators were talking about online, so this recipe is relatively new to me.

- 1 bag (2 pounds) sifted confectioners’ sugar
- 1 stick unsalted butter, softened and cut into ½-inch cubes
- 1 ½ cups solid vegetable shortening
- 1 ½ tablespoons vanilla extract
- ⅛ to ½ cup whole milk (to desired consistency)

Start by creaming the butter, shortening and vanilla. Next with the mixer on low speed slowly incorporate the confectioner sugar. Stop the mixer occasionally and scrape the bowl with a rubber spatula. Now add a small amount of the milk until you reach the consistency that suits you, beginning with  $\frac{1}{8}$  of a cup.

Once you have frosted your cake. Let it sit for about  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour until it crusts. Lay a piece of unpatterned paper towel or a piece of parchment paper on the surface and smooth using a fondant smoother, a spatula or your hands.

**NOTE:** The photo above is not crusting buttercream, although it does look similar to what a crusting buttercream would look like. It is whiter than the other recipes because it contains a high proportion of shortening and powdered sugar.

## [Italian Meringue Buttercream](#)



This is the recipe that I use and have used for years and it is truly delicious, silky smooth and not too sweet. It starts with a meringue which is made using egg whites and a hot sugar syrup. Once cooled softened unsalted butter and a flavoring of your choice is added. It's quite simple

once you get the hang of it. I use Vanilla most of the time but you can use Almond or other extracts. This is also the BEST for an outdoor wedding reception on a hot day.

- 1 - 1/3 cups of softened unsalted butter
- 1/3 cup water
- 3/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons of granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon of corn syrup or 1/8 teaspoon cream of tartar
- 3 egg whites at room temperature
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon of vanilla or almond to taste
- Optional: pinch of salt

Blend the butter in a mixer or use a wooden spoon to mix and soften the butter or chop it up into small pieces. Place the water and sugar into a pot and cook until the temperature reaches 238 degrees (this takes about 8 minutes) You can set your timer and then check the temperature of the whites at 8 minutes with a candy thermometer.

\*OPTIONAL: I do not bother with this step anymore. Using a pastry brush dipped in water occasionally sweep around the edges of the boiling sugar to make sure all of the sugar is incorporated and to keep it from forming crystals on the pot. (if you keep the boil low you should not have to do this)

While the sugar syrup is cooking, start preparing the egg whites. Begin by beating the whites on low to medium until frothy. Slowly add the 2 tablespoons of sugar to the frothy whites. Increase the speed to high and beat them until soft peaks form. (stiff but not dry)

Slowly pour the hot syrup to the whipped egg whites. Mix the egg whites and syrup until the egg whites are shiny and the peaks are firmer. It will be the consistency of marshmallow. Continue mixing until it cools. 10-15 minutes.

Now you will need to incorporate the butter into the cooled egg white/sugar mixture. Slowly add bits of room temperature butter (the butter needs to be soft, you can microwave it slightly to warm it if you need to. You can add it in chunks or pre whip the butter and then add it as I talked about above) to the egg whites and sugar. It will seem to not mix very well at first (in fact it may look a little curdled for a bit) but it will come together and be very smooth and creamy in the end.

You can store this wedding cake frosting in the fridge for a couple of weeks well covered. When you are ready to use it again let it come to room temperature or soften enough so that you can re-whip it. Here is the latest version of my [Italian Meringue Buttercream](#) recipe on YouTube at

the Wedding Cakes For You Channel. Makes 3 ½ cups or enough to fill and frost an 8 or 9 inch cake.

## Swiss Meringue Buttercream



This recipe is just as delicious as the Italian meringue version but you don't have to worry about cooking the sugar to such a high temperature. The egg whites and sugar are heated to 120 degrees over a pan of hot water, beaten and cooled until stiff but not dry, the butter is then added along with the extract of vanilla or other flavor.

- ¾ cups of sugar
- 4 egg whites
- 1 ¼ cups of softened butter same as 2 ½ sticks
- ¼ teaspoon cream of tartar
- pinch of salt
- 1 teaspoon of vanilla or almond extract

Place the sugar and egg whites in a bowl and stir together. Place the bowl over a pan with a small amount of water. ( or a double boiler if you have one) Set the burner to low. Place a candy thermometer into the egg white and sugar mixture, stir often while heating to 120 degrees. Meanwhile prepare the butter by whipping it with a handheld beater or in your standing mixer until soft and smooth and set aside. Place the warmed egg white and sugar mixture into another bowl with a beater attachment. Add the cream of tartar and beat at medium speed until frothy. Raise the speed to high and beat until stiff peaks form. Continue mixing until the mixture cools

enough to add the butter. (5-10 minutes) Add the butter a little bit at a time until it is all incorporated into the whites. There may be a point where the mixture looks curdled, just continue mixing until it all comes together. Add the vanilla or almond extract. The video will help you to visualize the process. Here is the link to [Swiss Meringue Buttercream](#) at Wedding Cakes For You YouTube Channel. Makes 3 cups or enough to fill and frost an 8 or 9 inch cake,

## [Classic French Buttercream](#)



Ooh La La this is my latest discovery. All of these years I was stuck on my Italian Meringue recipe not realizing how amazing THIS recipe is. Well now I know. The only downside to it is the color. It is made with egg yolks instead of the whites. I think it is probably best used as a filling and a crumb coat unless you are looking for a rich soft pale yellow color. The taste is out of this world. It the richest of all of the buttercreams.

- 1 cup unsalted butter softened
- ½ cup plus 1 tablespoon of sugar
- ¼ cup water

- 1/8 teaspoon cream of tartar
- 4 large egg yolks

Start by softening up the butter with a wooden spoon or mixer. Then in a saucepan stir together the water, sugar and the cream of tartar. Place the pan on the stove over medium heat. Bring it to a low boil and cook for 6-8 minutes or until a candy thermometer reads 238 degrees. While the sugar is cooking, place the egg yolks in a bowl of an electric beater with a whisk and beat for 7 minutes or until the yolks are pale in color. Pour the hot syrup in carefully while the mixer is at medium speed. Be careful to pour the syrup in a small stream and try not to get any on the beaters. If that happens just leave it be, do not try to scrape it into the bowl. Continue beating the mixture while it cools down enough to add the butter without melting it. Add the butter slowly little bits at a time until it is all incorporated into the yolks. Keep mixing until it all comes together. Here is the link to the [French Buttercream](#) so that you can see all of the steps. In the video the buttercream looks fairly white, but it definitely has a pale yellow tint to it. Makes 2 cups or enough to frost the sides and top of an 8 inch cake,

*To make other flavors for all of the above recipes: You can add melted chocolate, cocoa, finely chopped nuts, fruit, jam, lemon or orange juice, almond extract or liquors and so much more...use your imagination and have fun.*

## [Q&A](#)

- Does buttercream need to be refrigerated after it is on the cake?

*Buttercream can be left out of the refrigerator overnight before and after it is on a cake. As long as it is in a cool spot and in a box or under a covering of fondant.*

- Is buttercream ok to use as a layer underneath fondant?

*Buttercream is fine under fondant. It is nice and smooth and will make a perfect under layer for you.*

- How long will buttercream last in the fridge?

*Covered tightly in an airtight container your buttercream will last for two weeks in the fridge and up to a month in the freezer.*

- What is the best buttercream to use in high humidity?

I have found that the best recipe for hot or humid weather is the Italian meringue buttercream. But have also used the American in the same situation. No matter what, if your cake is cold and the warmer air hits it, the frosting will have a tendency to sweat. The best way to prevent this is to bring it to the warmer temperature slowly by removing it from the refrigerator into a cool room and then once the cake adjusts bring it into the warmer room. Most reception halls are air conditioned so in this case the trick is to keep the cake cool until you get it to the reception. Dry Ice can be very helpful if your car or vehicle is not cool enough. Here is a helpful link to photos of the process of delivering a cake with [dry ice](#). I am using Cake Stackers in the photos. If you are interested in learning about Cake Stackers go [here](#) and you will get a 5% discount when your order through my website.

- Can I frost a frozen cake?

Yes you can frost a frozen cake. There are a few things to know when you do this. The frosting will set very quickly, so you must move fast. Sometimes the crumb coat will start to sweat and cause water droplets on the surface which makes it VERY difficult to ice. It's best to let your cakes defrost a bit before icing.

- How do I add chocolate to the buttercream and what is the best type of chocolate to add?

I prefer cocoa as it gives a deep rich color and flavor to the buttercream. Sift the cocoa to remove any lumps and then add it a little at a time to the buttercream to taste. Melted bittersweet or semi-sweet works well too. Melt the chocolate over a double boiler or carefully in the microwave. If you heat it too quickly or over too high a heat the chocolate will burn. If you get any liquid in the chocolate it will seize up and be useless. Be careful when handling chocolate in general, cool it a little bit so it does not melt the buttercream and then mix it to taste.

- What is the best buttercream for piping Roses and other flowers?

## [Best Buttercream For Flowers](#)

This recipe by Roland Winbeckler is the best for piping flowers. He has an amazing book called Roland Winbeckler's Buttercream Flowers and Arrangements which I sometimes refer to for ideas and to learn his flower techniques. He has a YouTube channel where you can see and learn to make his wonderful flowers.

2 lbs powdered sugar (confectioners' sugar)  
2 cups shortening (Sweetex or Crisco)  
1/3 cup water  
1/4-1/3 teaspoon salt

2 teaspoons vanilla

Mix sugar, water and 25% of the shortening, salt and vanilla until smooth-about 5 minutes at low speed. Add the remaining shortening and mix about 5 minutes at low speed. scrape down and mix for 3-5 more minutes at medium speed.

It may be necessary to increase or decrease the amount of water. Just remember you want the icing to be firm enough so that the flowers will stand up and not wilt.

Here is a [great little video](#) with two awesome tips for fixing a problem batch of buttercream that is either too soft or curdled.

To see all of the Q&A about frosting and icing at the website go [here](#).



*And if you have a particular question that is not answered please [contact](#) me anytime.*

*Thank you soooooo much :-)*

*Happy Baking and Cake Decorating to You!!*

*Lorelie Carvey*

*P.S. Do you want to learn to [make a wedding cake](#)? My step-by-step e-book has helped a lot of people build the skills and confidence to bake from scratch delicious and beautiful wedding cakes.*