

American Buttercream Frosting

Yield: approximately 4 cups

Ingredients

2 sticks unsalted butter, room temperature

1 cup Crisco vegetable shortening (or high ratio shortening such as Sweetex in hot weather which has a higher melting point)

8 cups sifted powdered sugar (confectioners' sugar)

2-4 Tbsp water (or more to reach desired frosting consistency – see notes and tips below)

Flavoring (see note on flavoring options below*)

Pinch of salt (helps reduce sweetness and enhance flavor)

2 Tbsp meringue or 1 tsp agar powder (optional – see note below**)

Instructions

Using an electric mixer with paddle attachment, cream the butter and shortening on medium speed until light and fluffy. Add your choice of flavoring (see note below*) and mix well on low speed, scraping down the sides of the bowl occasionally.

Gradually add the powdered sugar, one cup at a time. Start by mixing each cup on a low speed, then transition to beating well on medium speed. Scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl after each cup of sugar is added. When all the sugar has been mixed in, the frosting will be dry and stiff.

Add in the pinch of salt and your choice of flavoring option, mixing on medium speed until distributed.

Gradually add small amounts of water until the desired consistency is reached. Continue to beat at medium speed until light and fluffy. Scrape down the bowl once more and beat again to make sure all the ingredients are incorporated.

Notes and Tips

It is perfectly fine to add more or less water than noted to obtain the desired consistency. Humidity and accuracy of ingredient measurements also affect the consistency.

Using butter and vegetable shortening increases the stability of the frosting in warmer weather.

***Flavoring Options (add before final water measurement to ensure desired consistency is obtained):**

- Vanilla: Add in 2 tsp vanilla extract. Tip: for a very white frosting, use clear vanilla for white frosting or add a *tiny* dot (like the tip of a toothpick) of purple gel coloring if using nonclear vanilla to reduce the cream-colored tint.
- Chocolate: Add 1 cup of sifted unsweetened cocoa powder (will require more liquid) or 4 oz. unsweetened chocolate, melted and slightly cooled.
- Wedding Cake Flavor: Add 1 tsp vanilla extract and ½ tsp almond extract
- Lemon: Add 3 Tbsp lemon zest and ¼ cup lemon juice. Remove the water and increase the confectioner's sugar to obtain desired consistency.
- Strawberry: Fold in 1 cup of seedless preserves or more to reach desired flavor intensity.

****Optional stabilizing ingredients:**

Add meringue powder (note: contains pasteurized egg whites) or agar powder (a flavorless vegan substitute for gelatin made from seaweed) as stabilizers to help decorations maintain their shape in warm weather. Frosting prepared with meringue powder will form a slight crust on the outside when drying, which allows for easier smoothing of points on piped items (such as round balls, or the end of a piped letter) as well as helping other piped decorations maintain their shape.