

Heather's Red Velvet Cake

This recipe was passed on to Heather by her mother. It uses a very unusual frosting, which starts out looking like glue but eventually transforms into a lovely pouf of fluffiness. Heather says you can also make it with cream cheese frosting, which, I must admit, sounds even more tempting. Finally, the alarming amount of red food coloring called for is not a typo. This is a special occasion cake. It's also the only time you're going to see me call for this particular ingredient in this particular quantity on this particular blog. Don't skimp, or your cake will not achieve the requisite red color.

Makes 1 two-layer cake

1-1/2 cups sugar
1/2 cup butter
2 eggs
2 cups flour
1 tablespoon cocoa powder
1 cup buttermilk (or 1 teaspoon vinegar mixed with 1 cup milk)
2 ounces red food coloring
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon baking soda stirred into 1 tablespoon vinegar

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease two 9" round cake pans, line them with parchment, grease them again and dust them with flour.

Cream the butter and sugar. Add the eggs and beat well. Sift the flour and cocoa three times and add them, alternating with the buttermilk, to the butter-sugar mixture. Add the food coloring and the vanilla. Fold in the baking soda/vinegar combo but do not beat. Pour into cake pans and bake for 25 to 30 minutes, or until a tester comes out clean.

1 cup milk
1/4 cup flour
1 cup butter
1 cup powdered sugar
2 teaspoons vanilla
Blueberries, red hots, or shredded coconut, for topping

Mix milk and flour in a medium saucepan until blended. Cook slowly until really thick, stirring constantly. (It will look like glue, especially as it cools.) Cool completely.

Cream butter and sugar until fluffy, then add to the flour/milk mixture and beat well. Beat in vanilla. The frosting should look like whipped cream when it's ready.

Frost the cake layers, then stack and frost the sides. Top, if desired, with blueberries, red hots, or shredded coconut.