

Create sweet fantasy in cake Follow tips so cake won't flop

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for the decorating tips, make changing tips and colors a breeze.

WITH A PROFESSIONALLY made wedding cake costing between \$1.25 to \$2 per person, a homemade

BASIC SPONGE CAKE BATTER
makes one 14-inch, one 9-inch, one 6-inch cake
2 1/2 cups sifted cake flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
1/2 cup milk
6 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into pieces
2 1/2 cups sugar
10 eggs, room temperature
7 eggs yolks, room temperature

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line the bottoms of a 14-inch, 9-inch and 6-inch round cake pan with waxed or parchment paper. Heat flour with baking powder twice; set aside. Heat milk with butter in a small saucepan over medium heat until butter is melted. Reduce heat to low, keep hot but do not simmer.

Combine sugar, eggs, and yolks in a 5-quart mixing bowl of an electric mixer. Set bowl over a pan of hot water. Whisk until sugar is dissolved and mixture is warm to the touch. Transfer bowl to mixer and beat at high speed using a whisk attachment until cool, tripled in volume and the consistency of whipped cream. Transfer batter to a larger bowl, sift 1/2 of flour mix over batter

cake prepared with love by a talented cook with the proper tools can come in way under 50 cents per person — quite a savings, especially with the costs of weddings these days. Not to mention the result, which will be infinitely more personal and rewarding than anything you

could buy, for a once-in-a-lifetime occasion.

And with the additional help of the knowledgeable salesfolks from the Bakers Acre and Kitchen Glamour, who knows, you might want to begin a cottage industry in cake baking.

moistened pastry brush and continue cooking until syrup reaches 242 degrees on a candy thermometer. Meanwhile, beat eggs with egg yolks in a mixer until pale yellow. As soon as syrup reaches 242 degrees, pour hot syrup over eggs in a thin, steady stream, beating constantly until all syrup has been added and mixture is cool.

Transfer to a large mixing bowl, and using mixer on high speed, gradually beat butter into egg mixture and continue beating until butter cream is smooth and spreadable. (Butter cream may curdle before becoming smooth.)

Uncover, wash down sides with a

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• Be sure bowls and beaters are clean, dry and free of fat, oil or egg yolks.
• Don't overbeat. Too much beating makes cake heavy or dry.

• Use solid shortening to grease pans. Sprinkle lightly with flour. Be sure pan is correct size, as specified in the recipe. To check, measure across the top, from inside edge to inside.

• Shiny, metal bake pans reflect heat away from the cake and produce a cake that is tender, with a light brown crust. When using glass baking pan, reduce the specified heat by 25 degrees but bake for same length of time.

• Don't fill pans too full. Two-thirds full is about right.

• Place pans in the middle of the oven and don't let them touch each other. Resist opening oven door until

the minimum baking time has elapsed.

• Cake is generally done when sides shrink slightly from sides of pan and top appears lightly browned. Test by sticking toothpick in middle. Cake is done if toothpick comes out clean. Or press lightly with finger. If cake springs back it's done.

• Cool cake by inverting pan on rack until cool. Gently remove cake from rack.

"After baking, some people set the cake on the (warm) stove, and the cake falls or gets lopsided," said Dan Miller of Elite Sweets.

• Cook cake thoroughly before frosting, or it will crumble. Miller suggests placing the cake in the refrigerator for three-four hours, or overnight, before frosting.

Miller recommends inverting the cake before frosting, putting the top layer on the bottom.

"You'll have a perfectly flat top," Miller said.

• Crumbs will result if the cake is split. To make frosting easier, place a light layer of icing — called the crumb layer — on cake. Refrigerate one hour and frost again.

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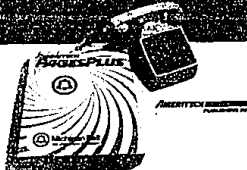
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