



4-H 365.15



Cake Decorating

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Would you like to learn how to create a cake in the shape of a baseball diamond with “bases” and “baseball players” in honor of your Dad’s birthday? Or would you prefer to learn to jazz up a chocolate cake with beautiful red roses and a green border?

Ancient Romans would bake a cake made of wheat or barley and break it over the bride’s head as a symbol of her fertility. It became tradition to pile up several small cakes, one on top of the other, as high as they could, and the bride and groom would kiss over the tower and try not to knock it down. If they were successful, it meant a lifetime of prosperity.

In the 1660s, during the reign of King Charles II, a French chef was visiting London and observed the cake piling ceremony. Appalled at the haphazard manner in which the British stacked baked goods, often to have them tumble, he conceived the idea of transforming the mountain of bland biscuits into an iced, multi-tiered cake sensation. British papers of the day are supposed to have deplored

the French excess, but before the close of the century, British bakers were offering the very same magnificent creations.

When you bake and decorate a cake for a special occasion, the smiling faces around the table will be your greatest reward. After a few supervised attempts and a lot of practice, you will be able to decorate beautiful cakes for birthday parties, anniversaries, and other special days. You can make any of these cakes. It starts with knowing the basics like simple borders, decorations, and cake molds. You can practice on boards, waxed paper, or freezer paper taped to cardboard, or even a cake pan turned upside down. Then it advances to lace/lattice work, tiered cakes, special icing, and finally advanced flowers.

Plan Your Project

Use this idea starter AND publication 4-H 365 *Self-Determined Project Guide* as you plan your project. All Ohio 4-H projects, including idea starters, include project activities, learning experiences, and leadership/citizenship activities. It is all spelled out in the *Self-Determined Project Guide*, available from your county Extension office or on the web at www.ohio4h.org/selfdetermined. You may choose to do a little or a lot depending on your level of interest. Be sure to register your project with your county OSU Extension office. Good luck!



Areas of Interest and Things to Do

Every self-determined project can be broken down into areas of interest. These are specific things members want to address during their project adventure. Using your 4-H 365 *Self-Determined Project Guide*, identify at least three (3) areas of interest with at least three (3) activities per area to explore. Take your ideas from the list below or make up your own.

Baking and Frosting

- Practice baking and frosting single layer cakes until you master a level cake with smooth icing.
- Try different frosting recipes and methods until you get a smooth icing.
- Decorate cakes for special occasions; take photos of your cakes.
- Bake and frost a single-layer cake that will be good for decorating.

Speciality Icing

- Prepare stiff, medium, and thin consistency icing.
- Try different designs on your practice surface.
- Experiment with different butter cream frosting recipes for different cakes.
- Prepare icing that is the proper consistency for borders, crop flowers, and lettering.

Decorating Equipment

- Develop a skill in using professional cake decorating equipment.
- Practice making cones from parchment paper.
- Experiment by filling pastry bags to different levels and see what works best for you.
- Compare parchment cones with cloth, plastic, and disposable decorating bags to see which you prefer.
- Experiment with bags using just a tip and then a coupler and a tip.
- Experiment with different tips to see how many designs you can make, including star, leaf, writing, and drop flower tips.

Basic Decorating Skills

- Use a practice surface to master your skill in making borders, lettering, flowers, and leaves.
- Design a stencil and use it to decorate a cake.
- Design a paper pattern, transfer it to the cake, and decorate.

Baking Skills

- Plan, bake, frost, and decorate a single-layer cake.
- Plan, bake, frost, and decorate a two-layer cake.
- Plan, bake, frost, and decorate a cut-up cake.
- Plan, bake, frost, and decorate a cake using a special shaped pan.

Community Service Baking

- Volunteer to make a cake for a family celebration or community event.
- Hold a cake walk.
- Volunteer at a bakery.
- Hold a cake decorating clinic.
- Organize a food drive.
- Perform a cake decorating demonstration at a nursing home.

Optional Resource

492R Cake Decorating Resource Handbook

This all-inclusive cake decorating book from Wyoming 4-H goes hand-in-hand with this idea starter. Includes everything from baking the cake to decorating with special effects. Copies are available for order from your 4-H club leader or county Extension office.

www.ohio4h.org/selfdetermined



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