



Makes: enough to frost 18 cupcakes

Total Time: 15 minutes

Cream Cheese Buttercream Icing

Ingredients

- 2 ounces cream cheese softened
- 1/2 cup butter softened
- 1 vanilla bean halved and seeds scraped or 1 teaspoon vanilla bean paste or 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp almond extract
- 4-6 tbsp milk
- 6 cups powdered sugar

Instructions

Beat cream cheese and butter on medium speed until light and fluffy, about 5 minutes.

Add 4 tablespoons of milk and vanilla bean seeds (or vanilla bean paste or vanilla) beat again for 2 minutes.

Gradually beat in powdered sugar. Beat until light and fluffy. If too thick add a bit more milk, just a teaspoon at a time. If too thin add a bit more powdered sugar. (It needs to be thick enough to hold its shape, but not so thick that you have difficulty swirling the icing through the decorating tip.)

Instructions for the Swirl Technique:

Prepare icing as directed and divide into two or three bowls, depending on how many colors you want in your swirls. Add food coloring to achieve desired colors. I really like the gel food coloring, it gives much deeper, richer colors and comes in a wide variety of beautiful hues.

Lay out 2 or 3 (depending on how many colors you are using) pieces of plastic wrap (approximately 18"-20" long) on your work surface. Spread out the contents of each bowl on a

separate piece of the plastic wrap lengthwise, forming a rectangle, approximately 8" long. Starting with one long side, fold plastic wrap over the icing and roll into a cylinder-shaped tube. Secure both ends with a knot. Repeat with the remaining colors.

When you're ready to ice the cupcakes, fit a large pastry bag with a large star decorating tip. (I use a Wilton 1M) or snip a tiny corner off of a gallon-size zippered bag and fit with a large star decorating tip.

Cut off one of the knot ends from each tube and place tubes in prepared pastry bag. Pipe cupcakes as desired. Have fun watching the three beautiful colors unfold!

Chef's Note:

Red and Blue icing can be difficult to achieve. You can continue to add the gel food coloring until you have a deep shade of each color, but it might turn your teeth and lips blue or red!

Instead, get to a shade that you like, and then let the icing sit for 24 hours on the kitchen counter. The colors will intensify as time goes on.

Recipe from Cafe Sucre Farine