



**COOKING CLASSES**  
AT SUR LA TABLE

**2-DAY SERIES:  
RAINBOW CAKE**

WITH SUR LA TABLE CHEF

# Ingredient Shopping List

Below is a list of ingredients you'll need to make the recipes in this packet. Please reach out for substitution suggestions.

## Dairy

- 11 large egg whites
- 6 1/2 sticks unsalted butter

## Pantry Items

- Granulated sugar
- Cake flour
- Baking powder
- Fine kosher salt or sea salt
- Vegetable oil
- Vanilla bean paste or vanilla extract

## Dry/Canned Goods

- Red, orange, yellow, green, blue and violet gel food colorings
- 1/2 cup rainbow sprinkles

# Equipment Needed

Below is a list of tools you'll need to make the recipes in this packet.

## Cutlery

- Paring knife
- Chef's knife

## Hand Tools/Gadgets

- Large offset spatula and small 4" offset spatula
- Bench scraper
- Whisk
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Silicone spatula
- Digital scale (optional)
- Instant-read thermometer
- Cake turntable (best option), cake stand or lazy Susan
- 6 mixing bowls
- Heat-proof bowl (if not using stand mixer)
- Kitchen scissors
- Pastry brush
- Flour sifter or fine-mesh strainer
- Small clean paintbrush (optional)

## Cookware

- Medium saucepan

## Appliances

- Stand mixer with paddle and whisk attachment or hand mixer

## Bakeware

- 6, 6" cake pans
- Wire cooling racks
- Disposable pastry bags
- Star pastry tips in multiple sizes
- Round pastry tips in medium and small
- Leaf tip (optional) and petal tip (optional)

## Other

- Parchment paper
- 6" cardboard cake round

## Pre-Class Mise en Place and Notes

- Please gather all ingredients prior to class if you will be cooking along.
- It is helpful to organize the ingredients by recipe on rimmed baking sheets.
- Feel free to pre-measure ingredients, but it is not necessary.
- We encourage you to prep all your ingredients before class as it will allow you to have more time to listen and watch the instructor.

### Before Class, Day 1:

1. 30 minutes prior to class, remove 6 egg whites, 5 eggs and 4 tablespoons unsalted butter from refrigerator and allow to come to room temperature.
2. Preheat oven to 350°F and position racks in upper and lower thirds of the oven.
3. Clear a 10" wide by 12" high area in your refrigerator for chilling cake.

### Day 1:

1. Make 6 cake layers (1 each) in red, orange, yellow, green, blue and purple.
2. Make buttercream.
3. Crumb coat cake.
4. Chill cake and buttercream in refrigerator overnight.

### Before Class, Day 2:

1. 1 hour prior to class, remove remaining buttercream from refrigerator and allow to soften.

### Day 2:

1. Re-whip buttercream.
2. Dye buttercream.
3. Complete final frosting.
4. Decorate cake with buttercream decorations and sprinkles.

## RAINBOW CAKE

**Yield:** 6", 6-layer cake

For best results, it is best to plan on a 2-day process from start to finish. You will need a minimum of 3, 6" cake pans to make this recipe. If using 3 cake pans, prepare two 1/2 recipes.

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*Butter for greasing cake pans, at room temperature*  
*5 large eggs, separated, at room temperature*  
*8 3/4 ounces (1 1/4 cups) granulated sugar, divided*  
*6 1/3 ounces cake flour (1 1/2 cups), sifted*  
*1 tablespoon baking powder*  
*1 teaspoon fine kosher salt or fine sea salt*  
*4 ounces (1/2 cup) lukewarm water*  
*4 ounces (1/2 cup) vegetable oil*  
*2 tablespoons vanilla extract*  
*1/8 teaspoon red, orange, yellow, green, blue and violet gel food colorings*  
*1/2 cup rainbow sprinkles, for decorating*

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Preheat oven to 350°F and position racks in upper and lower thirds of the oven. Butter, flour and line bottom of 6, 6" round cake pans with parchment paper.

1. **To prepare batter:** To the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment add the egg whites. On medium speed, beat whites until foamy. On medium speed, gradually add 1/2 cup sugar to whipping egg whites. Once all sugar has been added, increase speed to medium-high and beat until soft peaks form. Carefully transfer whites into a clean mixing bowl, do not deflate.
2. Wipe stand mixer bowl clean. To clean stand mixer bowl fitted with a paddle attachment, add flour, remaining 3/4 cup sugar, baking powder and salt. On medium-low speed, add lukewarm water into dry ingredients; increase speed to medium and add oil, egg yolks and vanilla. Beat until mixture is smooth and no streaks remain, scraping down sides of bowl with a silicone spatula as needed. Carefully fold whites into batter in 3 additions, do not deflate batter.
3. Divide batter evenly between six mixing bowls, each portion will weigh 5 1/2 ounces. Add a scant 1/8 teaspoon gel food coloring to each bowl and fold dye throughout batter, do not deflate batter. Adjust vibrancy of color by adding more dye and folding carefully. Pour each colored batter into a prepared cake pan. Using an offset spatula, level top of batter.
4. Transfer cakes to preheated oven, bake until tester inserted into center comes out clean, 12 to 15 minutes. Cool cakes in pans, 10 minutes. Turn cakes out of pans onto wire cooling racks and cool completely.

### **Recipe variations:**

- To flavor batter, add 1 teaspoon pure extract such as strawberry, orange or lemon.

## BUTTERCREAM FROSTING

***Yield:*** 6 cups

Velvety smooth, buttercream is the king of frostings. This version is a Swiss meringue buttercream, which simply means that the egg whites and sugar are heated together before beating. The buttercream can also be flavored in many ways, which makes it very versatile. Any leftover frosting freezes beautifully; it simply needs to be thawed to room temperature and re-whipped to be used another day.

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*6 large egg whites, at room temperature*  
*10 1/2 ounces (1 1/2 cup) granulated sugar*  
*1 1/2 pounds (6 sticks) unsalted butter, chilled, cut into 1" pieces*  
*1/2 tablespoon vanilla bean paste, vanilla extract, or almond extract*  
*1/2 teaspoon fine kosher salt*

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1. To the bowl of a stand mixer, add egg whites and sugar; whisk to blend. Bring 2 inches of water to a simmer in a medium saucepan. Place bowl with whites and sugar over simmering water and heat, whisking constantly, until mixture reaches 160°F (hot to the touch) on an instant-read thermometer. Remove mixture from heat and attach bowl to a stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment. Whisk mixture on high speed until it cools to room temperature, is light and billowing, and resembles marshmallow fluff. If mixture is warm, it will melt butter. Test temperature of meringue by touching the bottom exterior of bowl, it should feel room temperature.
2. Replace whisk attachment with paddle attachment. With mixer on medium-high speed, add chilled butter, a couple of tablespoons at a time, allowing each addition to blend in fully before adding next. Halfway through adding butter, stop mixer and use a silicone spatula to scrape down sides of bowl thoroughly. Continue to whip until all butter has been added and mixture is velvety and smooth. Add vanilla bean paste and salt, whip to incorporate.
3. Keep buttercream in an airtight container in refrigerator for up to 1 week or in freezer for up to 2 months. Let buttercream come to room temperature and re-whip in the mixer with paddle attachment before using.

### ***Recipe variations:***

- Buttercream can be flavored with melted and cooled chocolate, pureed fruit, natural extracts, toasted nuts, and salted caramel. Flex your imagination, buttercream be flavored with almost anything.

## HOW TO BUILD A RAINBOW LAYER CAKE

### Good Rules of Thumb:

- Cakes should be completely cool, or cold before cutting and assembling.
- Trim uneven areas of cake layers from sides and top with a serrated knife.
- Cake layers can be moistened with a flavored simple syrup or liquor. This does two things; infuses the cake with an additional layer of flavor and keeps the cake crumb moist.
- If slicing layers in half, cut surfaces should always face interior of cake.

### ASSEMBLY INSTRUCTIONS

A cake-decorating turntable is recommended, but not necessary. These instructions are written as if you are using one. If not using a turntable, place the cake on a cake stand, lazy Susan or cake plate; slip sheets of parchment paper under the edges of the cake before placing on cake stand or lazy Susan.

#### Assembling Rainbow Layers (Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Violet)

1. Set bottom cake layer on a cardboard cake round the same circumference as cake, spoon a small amount of buttercream in center of turntable and then place cake on turntable.
2. If soaking layers, evenly brush or mist surface of bottom cake layer.
3. Pipe or spread a thin even layer of buttercream on bottom layer and spread into a uniform layer. Filling layers should be no thicker than 1/2" thick. The thicker the filling, the more unstable the layer cake.
4. Top with second layer of cake and repeat process. Repeat with additional layers. Straighten layers as necessary.

#### Crumb Coat

1. Apply a generous portion of buttercream to top of cake. Using a long offset spatula or bench scraper, spread buttercream smoothly and evenly across top of cake while slowly turning turntable with your free hand and pushing excess buttercream over edges. Holding the spatula vertically at a 90-degree angle or a bench scraper at a 45-degree angle to cake, slowly turn turntable with your free hand. Continue turning turntable until an even layer of buttercream coats cake.
2. As you crumb coat, scrape any excess buttercream without crumbs into a bowl to be reused. Excess buttercream containing crumbs should be discarded in a separate bowl.
3. Spot check cake and fill any holes with additional buttercream. turning turntable until an even layer of buttercream coats cake. Holding the spatula vertically at a 90-degree angle or a bench scraper at a 45-degree angle to cake, slowly turn turntable with your free hand. Continue turning turntable until an even layer of buttercream coats cake.
4. The buttercream will have risen from sides and extended above top of cake, making a lip or ridge.
5. To clean top edge, start from edges of cake and hold the spatula parallel to top of cake and pull buttercream inward toward center, creating a sharp edge and a smooth surface. Remove excess buttercream from spatula and until top edges are smooth.

6. Set crumb coat by transferring cake to refrigerator or freezer until crumb coat is firm to the touch.
7. For a “naked cake” look, do not final frost cake. Decorate cake after crumb coat has set.

### **Finishing the Cake**

1. Follow crumb coat instructions to create an even, smooth finish of buttercream. Finish can be smooth or decorated with swooshes or spikes using a spoon or spatula. A piping bag fitted with a decorative tip can be used to pipe decorations and a decorative border around the cake.
2. ***To coat cake with garnish:*** After your final buttercream coat, pour garnishes such as chopped nuts, toasted coconut, sprinkles or chocolate shavings into a medium-sized bowl. Hold cake under cardboard in your non-dominant hand over bowl. Scoop handfuls of garnish into your dominant hand and press into sides of cake, letting excess garnish fall into bowl. Repeat until sides are covered evenly.
3. ***To coat cake with ganache:*** Set cake onto an icing screen or wire-rack set over a rimmed baking sheet. Using your preferred ganache glaze recipe. Pour slightly warm glaze over a well-chilled, or frozen cake. Finish with melted chocolate piping work or decorations.

## TOOLS OF THE TRADE

### **Cake Pans**

The best pans to use are sturdy aluminum baking pans. These pans are usually 2" in depth, have straight sides and the lightweight aluminum ensures even baking.

### **Cooling Racks**

Cake texture will be at its optimum if it is allowed to cool properly. Cooling racks lift the cake pans enough to let air circulate around the pan. Once removed from oven, let cakes sit in pans on cooling rack for 10 – 15 minutes, and then invert pans to unmold cakes. Allow unmolded cakes to sit on cooling racks until they have fully cooled and are at room temperature.

### **Icing Spatulas**

Spatulas are essential. You don't need many but having a few different sizes at your fingertips can make the difference in success. For exterior frosting and smoothing, you will need one offset spatula and one straight spatula at least longer than the diameter of your widest cake pan. A 4" offset and straight are perfect for smaller work, where detail and precision are important.

### **Bench Scraper**

Also called a bench knife, it is a staple tool in any kitchen. We even find them to be essential in our savory cooking classes! For cake decorating, a bench scraper is useful to scrape the exterior frosting surface smooth by holding it vertically while spinning the cake on its turntable.

### **Serrated Knife**

To trim a cake level, split a cake horizontally for filling, and for slicing the finished cake, you will need to have a sturdy serrated knife. The teeth on the blade can cut into the finished cake without mashing down the delicate layers.

### **Cake Decorating Turntable**

The heavy-duty cast-iron ones are the best; however, you can still achieve good results using a lighter-weight plastic cake turntable. Avoid the flat, low-profile ones that resemble Lazy Susan trays. You want one that raises the cake off the table by at least 4", and that can rotate in both directions smoothly.

### **Pastry Bags**

There are two kinds: reusable and disposable. opt for the type that best suits your budget and frequency. Reusable ones can be washed and stored over and over again; however, they do tend to build up residual grease over time (no matter how carefully you wash them!). They can then only be used for buttercreams. The disposable ones can be used just once (and then washed again to be reused) for any type of piping your project needs: chocolate, jams, buttercream, meringue, and even for savory projects!

### **Decorating Tips**

Piping tips, as they are also known, provide your cake with visual dimension. The different shapes of the tips can make beads, shells, stars, flowers and leaves. Start off with a basic set that include plain round tips (small, medium and large) for writing and for beads, star tips for shells and stars, leaf tips for leaves and borders.

## TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL CAKE DECORATING

### Leveling and Splitting the Cake

First, make sure parchment paper is still attached to bottom of cake. If not, cut a parchment round and set your cake on top - this will allow you to turn the cake easily. Place your cake right side up on your work surface. Lean over so you are at eye level looking sideways at the cake. Spread your left hand (if you are right-handed) flat on top of cake and use this hand to rotate cake in a complete circle while you look at top edge, then set your serrated knife there. You must trim the top of the cake to this lowest point or the cake will be lopsided, perhaps dangerously so if there are several layers. Yes, you can compensate with extra frosting, but no more than a half-inch. The good news is you can save your scraps for a trifle or cake pops.

To slice cake in half for two layers, first measure cake's height. Halfway up its side, insert a toothpick sideways into cake to a depth of about 1". Continue, inserting additional toothpicks at 2" intervals around cake. Set your serrated knife just above toothpicks and place your left hand flat on top of cake. Use a gentle sawing motion as you cut across cake. Take your time, move slowly, and make sure your knife is always visible out the other side of cake. Once the knife tip disappears inside cake, it's easy to slice unevenly. Keep your hand on top, pressing down lightly to turn cake – this also allows you to feel the position of the knife inside cake. If you accidentally turn the knife upward or downward, you'll be able to feel that right away and correct position. In a matter of moments, you'll have two even layers. Always save bottom layer of cake, with parchment attached, to use as top of your layer cake. Parchment paper keeps the bottom even and free of crumbs, which is just what you want when frosting the top of your cake.

### Assembling and Filling Cakes

It is easiest and most efficient to assemble your layer cakes on a cake cardboard the same size as your cake pan. Cake cardboards are available in cake-supply, specialty cookware and large craft stores. They make moving and storing the cake easier. Always use the white side of board, not brown, in contact with food. If you don't have (or can't get it) a cake cardboard, use a tart pan bottom or a flat plate.

Brush each cake layer with flavored soaking syrup if directed (or desired). Brush each layer on cut side, if you have the option, which more readily soaks up syrup. If filling your cake, pipe an even dam of buttercream along edge of each layer and scoop filling onto center cake, making sure your filling is slightly lower than your buttercream dam. Use an offset spatula to spread filling evenly to edge of dam. Use a second cake cardboard or tart pan bottom to move tender cake layers around and to help them slide them into place on top of filling. Repeat until all layers have been filled. If filling your layers only with buttercream, starting from center of each layer, pipe a spiral of buttercream to edge. Using an offset spatula, spread your buttercream evenly. Repeat for every layer.

## CRUMB COATING AND FROSTING TIPS

### Applying a Crumb Coat

The crumb coat is very thin, see-through layer of frosting that seals in any crumbs, fills cracks and smooths the outside of the cake in preparation for the final, thicker coat of frosting. It's like spackling a wall in preparation for painting. Begin by piping or spooning a cup of buttercream on top of cake. Using an offset spatula, carefully rotate your turntable while holding your offset spatula flat and parallel to surface of cake. Don't worry if some of your buttercream extends over edge. Once you have a flat layer of buttercream on top of cake, pipe or spoon buttercream on sides of cake. Using a bench scraper or a large offset spatula held at a 90° angle, rotate turntable while you spread buttercream in an even layer along sides of cake. Cover entire cake with a very thin layer of frosting. Once crumb coat is finished,

refrigerate cake for 10 to 15 minutes, just to chill and set crumb coat. If chilled for too long, the crumb coat becomes very hard and the final coat of frosting will slide off the cold, slick surface as you try to apply it.

### **Applying the Final Frosting**

Scoop a large mound of frosting and place it into center of cake. Using an icing spatula or bench scraper (a straight spatula not offset is best here), spread frosting back and forth, pushing it toward edge of cake in all directions. Try to get an even layer across top of cake first. If you can't tell whether frosting is even, you can stick a very clean plastic ruler into frosting at several points around cake to see how you're doing.

## **DECORATING TIPS**

### **Using a Pastry Bag**

If you would like to pipe a top and/or bottom border, or decorate surface of cake, you'll need a pastry bag. Buy a pastry bag that is at least 14" long, as smaller bags are difficult to fill and keep clean as you work.

To fill a pastry bag, first cut 1/4 to 1/2" off the tip of the bag. Then drop pastry tip, pointed at end first, into bag and adjust so it's poking out from cut tip, like a nose cone on a spaceship. Twist bottom of bag just above wide opening of pastry tip and push the bag down into tip. This will prevent any filling from leaking out of tip while you are filling bag. Set bag in a large drinking glass or measuring cup and fold down top of bag to make a collar, or cuff at least 3" wide. This makes bag easier to fill and helps to keep outside of bag clean. The key is to keep frosting in bag or on cake - once outside of bag gets dirty, then your hands get dirty and it goes on from there. You don't want to find frosting in your car, on your sofa or on your dog, so keep it clean.

Scoop up some of frosting with a silicone spatula, insert spatula as far as possible into bag, and then scrape it off against side of bag. Repeat. Never fill bag more than halfway, or you'll have problems with frosting exiting wrong end of bag. Lift bag out of cup, unfold cuff, and hold top edges of bag with one hand while you use other hand to slide down bag, pushing all frosting toward tip end (twisted part near top will untwist on its own.)

Grip bag between thumb and forefinger of your right hand (if you're right-handed), just above mound of frosting, and twist the bag twice to trap frosting in bottom of bag. As you pipe, you'll need to occasionally squeeze down frosting and twist bag tight again. When decorating, always squeeze bag from top near twist – use fingers of your other hand to guide tip at bottom. Don't squeeze with "guiding" hand near tip or you'll force frosting up and out wrong end of bag.

For basic cake decorating, just a couple of piping tips will serve you well. A small 1/8" plain tip for writing on cakes with frosting and a 1/2" open star tip for piping decorations and borders are all you need to get started. With star-tip, you can pipe shells and rosettes, to name just a few options.

## **PIPING BASIC BORDERS**

### **Shells**

Fit pastry bag with a star tip of desired size and fill no more than halfway with frosting. Hold tip at a 45-degree angle to surface of cake. It should be about 1/2" above surface of cake. Press firmly and build a small mound of frosting, then slowly release pressure as you press tip toward surface of cake and away from mound. Stop pressure and lift tip from cake. You should have a teardrop-shaped shell. Begin next shell on tail of one before it. Continue until you have circled top and/or bottom edge of cake.

### **Rosettes**

Fit pastry bag with a star tip of desired size and fill no more than halfway with frosting. Hold tip at a 90-degree angle to surface of cake. It should be about 1/2" above surface. Press firmly and make a small, tight circle (no hole in center like a doughnut). When you come back to starting point, release pressure and lift tip away from icing. You should have a closed round of icing. Continue until you have circled top edge of cake.

### **Writing on Cakes with Chocolate**

You can use frosting and a tiny 1/16" plain tip in pastry bag to write messages on cakes, but an easier method is to melt an ounce or two of dark chocolate (or white if the cake is chocolate) in a bowl set over hot – not boiling – water, stirring until melted and smooth. Dry bottom of bowl and scrape chocolate into a disposable pastry bag. Squeeze chocolate into bottom of bag and cut a small hole in end. Practice writing on a scrap of paper, then write on cake. If it's a disaster, chill cake until chocolate is set then, with the tip of a paring knife, lift off writing from cake. Melt new chocolate and try again (the oil will be contaminated with moisture – save it for use in a pudding cake or batter)

### **Coating a Cake with Nuts**

Place toasted, chopped or sliced nuts on a dinner plate. Hold cake (on its cardboard) in one hand over plate and tilt it just slightly toward plate. Use your other hand to pick up some nuts, open your palm and press it flat against cake. Move your hand away and let any excess nuts fall back onto plate. Turn cake and repeat until all sides are coated evenly. This same technique can be used with shredded coconut, colored sugar, sprinkles, or grated chocolate.

### **Decorating Ideas Beyond Frosting**

While piping and nuts are very traditional, there are other ways of decorating cakes that produce beautiful results with simple techniques. Chocolate curls and decorations, gold leaf, sugared fresh flowers, stencil designs and spun sugar are just some of these options which are worth learning, after you have mastered the basics.