

AMERICAN MASTERING THE ART OF ROMANTIC CAKES

# CakeDecorating

LOVE IS ALL AROUND.

The Sweetest Way to Start 2024

← Pipe a vintage-inspired Valentine's Day cake.



10 RECIPES & TUTORIALS

CAKE SHOW SPECIAL FEATURES

RE-CREATE PANTONE'S COLOR OF THE YEAR

HOW AI CAN BENEFIT YOUR BUSINESS

JAN FEB 2024 • ISSUE 448

\$6.99 US



0 74470 98998 1

FROM OUR PARTNER

---





# Hello ACD READERS & FANS



## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Love is all around us! Can you feel it? Well, if you can't just yet, you definitely will after flipping through the pages of our new issue!

Between the fabulous recipes from upcoming cookbooks and the romantically fun tutorials, you won't be able to resist falling in love with 2024.

If you aren't already into Lambeth, our cover star Allison Reis will make you an instant fan. By using the techniques in a monochrome palette, it comes off as sophisticated as it is does whimsical. Of course, if you're all about the classics, we have gorgeous gum-paste garden roses, a dried floral arrangement, and more.

We've also got fun recipes from colorful confetti to historical truffles from Italy (and our

own Scott Bradshaw!) that are sure to tickle your tastebuds. Combine the flavors and techniques to create your own unique twist! And speaking of unique, we even have a special feature showcasing our own associate publisher Ania Munzer's wedding cake and an interview with the creator. You'll love her journey from reluctant decorator to successful business owner.

And since we're kicking off a new year, you'll definitely want to read every word of Cyd Mitchell's column. It's about AI and it's really eye-opening how technology can better your business and your creativity. So, what are you waiting for? Dig in and get in that kitchen! There's so much in store for 2024!

From my kitchen to yours,

*Ann Marie*

## We'd like to meet you...

Join our incredible community of cakery on your favorite platform, and don't forget to sign up for our newsletter to stay up to date on all things cake!



[americankakedecorating.com](https://www.americankakedecorating.com)



[americankakedecorating.com/blog](https://www.americankakedecorating.com/blog)



[facebook.com/americankakedecorating](https://www.facebook.com/americankakedecorating)



[facebook.com/groups/ACDCakeTalk](https://www.facebook.com/groups/ACDCakeTalk)



[instagram.com/americankakedecorating](https://www.instagram.com/americankakedecorating)

Want to pitch an idea or just want to say hello? Email [annmarie@americankakedecorating.com](mailto:annmarie@americankakedecorating.com).

# AMERICAN CakeDecorating

**Publisher/CEO** Grace McNamara

**Associate Publisher** Ania McNamara-Munzer

**Managing Editor** AnnMarie Mattila

**Creative Director** Brenda Drake Lesch

**Copy Editor** Maude Campbell

**Social Media  
Coordinator** Corina E. Buzdugan

**Contributors** Irena Aristigueta, Scott Bradshaw, Marianna Chumakova, Mandy Clifford, Jenny Hartin, Lindsey Johnson, Audrey Leonard, Seri Lopez, Megha Kwatra Madan, Cydni N. Mitchell, Allison Reiss, Jean A. Schapowal, Veronica Seta, Aaisha Sumbul

**Subscriptions** 651-330-0574; 1 Year \$19.95



SUBSCRIBE

AmericanCakeDecorating.com

**Editorial Director:** Please direct all correspondence, photos, and press releases to AnnMarie Mattila, [annmarie@americancakedecorating.com](mailto:annmarie@americancakedecorating.com), or mail to American Cake Decorating, 4707 Hwy 61 N #255, St Paul, MN 55110.

**Subscription Questions & Changes:** Send address changes to, New Mailing Address: American Cake Decorating, 4707 Hwy 61 N #255, St Paul, MN 55110 or email contact@americancakedecorating.com. Please notify us of address changes four to six weeks ahead of time. The post office is under no obligation to forward your magazine. If the postal authorities notify us that your magazine is undeliverable, we have no further obligation unless we receive a corrected address within one year. We cannot be responsible for non-delivery. The staff of American Cake Decorating magazine and AIM Communications LLC have reviewed contributions and advertising materials with the understanding that the information is original, accurate, and reliable, but we cannot be held responsible for such content. Please note that some of the techniques may be suitable for private home use, but are not necessarily appropriate for cakes destined for sale. American Cake Decorating magazine (ISSN 1094-8732) published bimonthly by AIM Communications, LLC, 4707 Hwy 61 N #255, St Paul, MN 55110. Tel: 651-330-0574; Fax: 651-756-8141. Visit our website at [www.americancakedecorating.com](http://www.americancakedecorating.com). Periodicals postage paid at St. Paul, MN, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to American Cake Decorating magazine, 4707 Hwy 61 N #255, St Paul, MN 55110. Allow 60 days for address change. Copyright ©2024 by AIM Communications, LLC. Reproduction in whole or part without written permission prohibited.

January | February 2024. Issue 448.

**HELLO**  
my name is

**FlavorRight™**  
Toppings & Icings Since 1966

**JUST THAW,  
POUR AND  
WHIP!**

It's beyond easy to  
whip-up & pipe brilliant  
designs with our full line  
of toppings and icings.

**Ask for us at your local  
baking supply store.**

**WHIP'N'NICE™**  
VANILLA • ICING AND FILLING

Net Wt. 2 lbs. (907g)

**f /flavorrightfoods**



# Contents

## IN THIS ISSUE

### CAKE TALK | 4

News, events, and more.

### YOU MADE IT! | 6

All about Pantone's Peach Fuzz.

### MEET THE MAKER | 18

A chat with sugar flower artist Arati Mirji.

### CAKE COLLABORATION | 32

Attend a Galentine's Day brunch.

### PICTURE-PERFECT | 36

Irenea Aristigueta shares smartphone tips.

### SHOPPING | 41

Everything is prettier in peach.

### SWEET BOSS | 46

Cyd Mitchell explains the virtues of AI.

### THE CAKE ALCHEMIST | 48

Take a trip to Italy with Scott Bradshaw.

### MEET THE MAKER | 56

Melanie Lewis creates a very special cake.

### LAST BITE | 68

Confetti cake from Jenny Hartin.

## SPECIAL FEATURES

### CAKE SHOWS 2024 | 64

Get ready to attend these top events.

### WORLD CAKE DESIGNERS CHAMPIONSHIP | 66

Jean Schapowal competes for Team USA.

## CAKE DIFFICULTY KEY

BEGINNER:



INTERMEDIATE:



ADVANCED:



EXPERT:



8



22



38



42

## RECIPES & TUTORIALS

### VINTAGE ROMANCE | 8

Cover star Allison Reiss loves Lambeth.

### BUTTERMILK VANILLA BEAN CAKE | 14

Lindsey Johnson shares a recipe from her new book.

### IN LOVE WITH GARDEN ROSES | 22

Learn classic gum paste from Veronica Seta.

### BIRD OF PARADISE | 28

Megha Kwatra Madan creates a wafer-paper stunner.

### LOVE BUGS | 38

Use the craft quilling technique from Aisha Sumbul.

### BLACKBERRY POPPYSEED CAKE | 42

Bake from Audrey Leonard's new book.

### DRIED WINTER FLORALS | 52

Seri Lopez pops flowers in the microwave.

### THE PURRFECTION COUPLE | 58

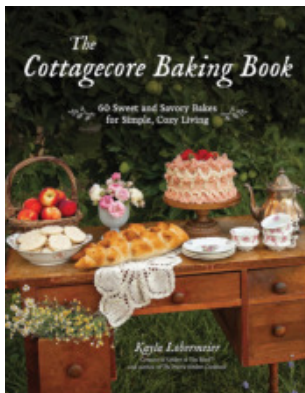
Two kitties are in love thanks to Marianna Chumakova.

# CAKE *Talk*

Connect with the community here and on social media for irresistible cake inspiration, sweet giveaways, essential news, and exclusive offers.

## BUY THE BOOK

New Releases in Cake Baking and Decorating



### ***The Cottagecore Baking Book: 60 Sweet and Savory Bakes for Simple, Cozy Living***

By Kayla Lobermeier  
Page Street Publishing  
(February 20, 2024)

From the author of *The Prairie Kitchen Cookbook* comes an enchanting escape into the realm of cottagecore baking, where

rustic charm meets mouthwatering flavors. Whether you are already living out your cozy cottage dreams or are just starting to embrace the softer, simpler life, you'll be captivated by the variety of baked goods on offer! Delight in luscious pies that are bursting with fresh, seasonal fruits; delicate teacakes and scones that enchant the eyes and the taste buds; and warm, crusty breads to fill your kitchen with pleasing aromas. Wherever you might be in your cottagecore journey, you'll soon find yourself embracing the slow-paced rhythms of cottage life as you whip up incredible sweet and savory treats.



### ***Wild Sugar: Seasonal Sweet Treats Inspired by the Mountain West***

By Lindsey Johnson  
Gibbs Smith  
(February 27, 2024)

Lindsey Johnson, along with Chase Reynolds Ewald, often finds cooking and baking muses from life in the West. Flavor profiles, ingredients, and artistic

decorating ideas are all sparked by the romantic and rustic western mountains. In this new book, Johnson teaches you how to create amazing desserts via more than 50 recipes, plus additional frostings, fillings, and toppings that are based on seasonal ingredients. These recipes are designed for the home baker and her detailed instructions, along with decorating tips and hints, will have you serving showcase cookies, pies, cakes, and sweets in no time. Johnson's stories and adventures in Wyoming bring additional fun to the cookbook with tales of Christmas tree hunting gone wrong, farm animal antics, huckleberry picking, and baking with kids. She also provides table-setting and serving ideas using repurposed items and help from nature.



### ***The Heirloomed Kitchen: Made-from-Scratch Recipes to Gather Around for Generations***

By Ashley Schoenith  
Gibbs Smith (January 23, 2024)

Ashley Schoenith has carefully curated a cookbook with nostalgic-style photography that beautifully presents the food while also showcasing heirloom cookware, serving vessels and utensils, and the gracious gentility of Southern hospitality. The recipes are slow-paced and packed with family memories taken from those splattered, handwritten recipe cards passed down from mother to child to grandchild. The 100-plus recipes, along with elegant photography, bring you to the table for family meals with breakfasts, appetizers, soups, salads, main dishes, sides, desserts, special holiday gatherings, and, of course, classic drinks for the cocktail hour. You'll find everything from flaky buttermilk biscuits to wild strawberry

shortcakes, all calling you to the dining room for food, family, and memory-making.





**Süss: Sweet German Treats for Every Occasion**

By Audrey Leonard  
Page Street Publishing  
(November 14, 2023)

Make the decadent German desserts of your dreams with this incredible collection from Audrey Leonard, the baker and photographer behind the popular Red Currant Bakery blog. An homage to Leonard's German heritage and her oma's baking, every delectable recipe in this book adds a modern flair to beloved, traditional German flavors. From cherished classic cakes and streusels to delightful sweet breads and festive holiday cookies, each recipe is sure to leave you with a new appreciation for the sweeter things in life.

**ICING SMILES BAKER OF THE MONTH**

**November**



Denise Smith

**December**



Arienne Saragnese

**NEW!**

**5 Piece Plain Star Cutter Set**  
No. 5750



**9 Piece Plain Round Cutter Set**  
No. 5757



**7 Piece Plain Heart Cutter Set**  
No. 5751

**9 Piece Fluted Square Cutter Set**  
No. 5703



**4 PIECE MODELING BALL TOOL SET**  
No. 4213

**FONDANT EXTRUDER WITH 20 DESIGN PLATES**  
No. 558



**7 Piece Plain Oval Cutter Set**  
No. 5754

**7 Piece Plain Football Set**  
No. 5755



**9 Piece Plain Square Cutter Set**  
No. 5753



[www.atecousa.com](http://www.atecousa.com)

Visit the Ateco website for all of our latest cake decorating tools and products.

# YOU MADE IT!

Find inspiration in Pantone's Color of the Year, Peach Fuzz, and these talented artists.

And remember: Don't forget to tag us on social media to possibly be featured in an upcoming issue.

Sugarnotes Pastry



NNC Cake Design



Alma Pasteles



Sonya's Sweet Shoppe



Shaun Teo



Miri Nadler



Natalie Cake Studio



Claire Owen



Bella Manse



Heather Tilstone



Flour & Flourish



Elegant Temptations

Sheri Wilson



Promised Land Cakes



**Corina E. Buzdugan**  
Digital Marketing  
Coordinator



facebook.com/AmericanCakeDecorating  
instagram.com/AmericanCakeDecorating

# VINTAGE ROMANCE

Are you in love with Lambeth?  
Valentine's Day is the perfect time to pipe your heart out.

BY ALLISON REISS

LEVEL: 



**Allison Reiss** began baking as a little girl by helping her mom and

nanas in the kitchen, baking everything from scratch. She's always been obsessed with food but went to college to study environment and business and ended up with an MBA. She loved whenever her work in marketing crossed paths with food styling, photography, recipes, and product development. But it was her young daughters that inspired her to explore new ways to make colorful cakes for them without all the artificial stuff. For her, it's not about baking as much as creating, finding new ways to design beautiful bakes and challenging herself to create Insta-worthy edible art naturally.

## COMPONENTS

### Edibles:

Fondant  
Natural food coloring:  
yellow, brown, and fuchsia  
red (Roxy & Rich)  
Powdered sugar  
6-inch cake  
American buttercream  
Water  
Nonpareils (Baking Time Club)  
Pearls (Baking Time Club)

### Equipment:

Rolling pin

Heart cutter  
Various heart plungers  
Small knife  
Rose mold  
Paintbrushes  
Stencil  
Offset spatulas  
Circle cutter  
Piping bags  
Piping tips: 1M, 3, 4B, 104,  
113, 840, 841, and 86g  
(Wilton and Ateco)  
Tweezers

**Tip:** IF THE FONDANT IS TOO DRY,  
MOISTEN IT WITH A DROP OF WATER.



[instagram.com/buttercreambreakfast](https://www.instagram.com/buttercreambreakfast)





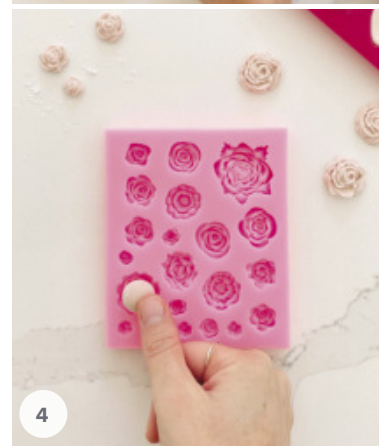
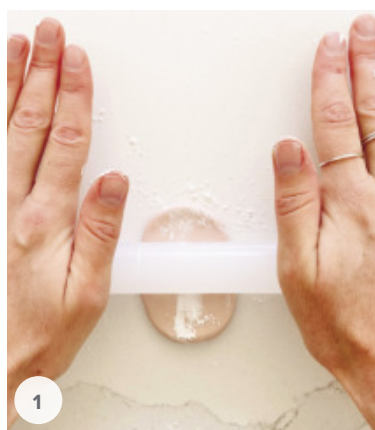
## WHAT YOU NEED



## MAKE THE FONDANT HEART

1. Using  $\frac{1}{2}$  pinch of yellow,  $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon of brown, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon of fuchsia red natural food coloring, color approximately  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup of fondant. Knead it on a dry, smooth surface sprinkled with powdered sugar to combine. Roll the fondant out to approximately  $\frac{1}{16}$  inch.
2. To cut 1 heart, use a medium-size heart cutter approximately 3 inches in diameter. Cut 6 hearts with the smallest heart plunger and 6 hearts with the medium heart plunger. Cut a few additional hearts using all 3 sizes of heart plunger.

3. Trim any rough edges with a small, sharp knife.
4. Roll a small ball of fondant, lightly dust the outside with powdered sugar, and press it into a 1-inch rose mold. Press to fill the mold completely with fondant, pinch it to remove any extra, and smooth the back. Push on the opposite side of the mold and gently remove the fondant. Repeat to make 6 roses and 8 smaller roses.
5. Using a paintbrush, remove any additional powdered sugar from the fondant decorations. Let the roses and hearts dry for a half-day on a smooth, flat surface sprinkled with powdered sugar.

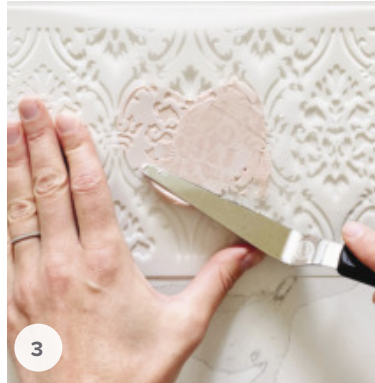


*Tip:* YOU CAN MAKE THESE A WEEK IN ADVANCE AND STORE THEM IN A DRY, AIRTIGHT CONTAINER AT ROOM TEMPERATURE.



## DECORATE THE CAKE TOP

1. Coat a 6-inch cake with buttercream. Chill it in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes.
2. Center the stencil on top of the cake. Spread a thin layer of buttercream over the stencil with a large offset spatula. Using a small offset spatula, smooth and remove extra buttercream. Carefully peel away the stencil.
3. Clean and dry the cake stencil. Center it over the fondant heart. Spread a thin layer of buttercream with a small offset spatula. Smooth and remove extra buttercream and carefully peel away the stencil.



## PIPE AROUND THE CAKE

1. Mark your cake with a circle cutter to create guides for the garlands.
2. Using petal tip #104, pipe an overlapping shell pattern over the guides. I keep the smallest side of the piping tip angled up, but you can also angle
3. Using closed star tip #840, pipe a shell pattern above the previous garlands with a slight overlap.
4. Using leaf tip #113, pipe in an overlapping shell pattern around the base of the cake. »

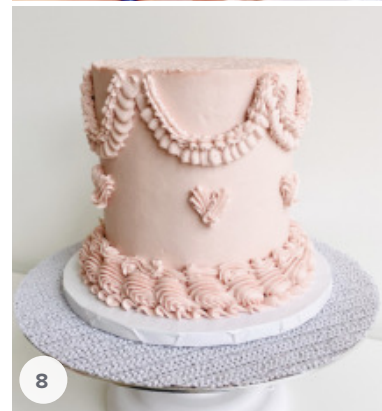
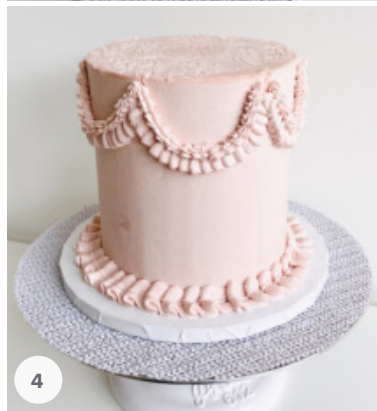
**Tip:** YOU CAN USE ROUND PARCHMENT PAPER AS A GUIDE TO MARK THE SECTIONS AS WELL.

the smallest side down. Stop approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch before the top of the cake.



5. Using French star tip #869, pipe in a shell pattern around the base of the cake above the #113 ruffles.
6. Using tip #840, pipe in a reverse shell pattern over the shell pattern made with #869.
7. Using a small tool like the end of a paintbrush, mark a spot a couple inches below the center of each garland.
8. Using closed star tip #841, pipe a heart over each mark by piping 2 shells in a V shape.
9. Using open star tip #4B, pipe a shell border around the top of the cake on the side.
10. Using open star tip #1M, pipe a shell border on top of the cake. Then, using tip #840, pipe a reverse shell border inside.

*Tip:* KEEP YOUR TOOL IN THE SAME POSITION AND USE A TURNTABLE TO HELP MARK THE SAME HEIGHT EACH TIME.



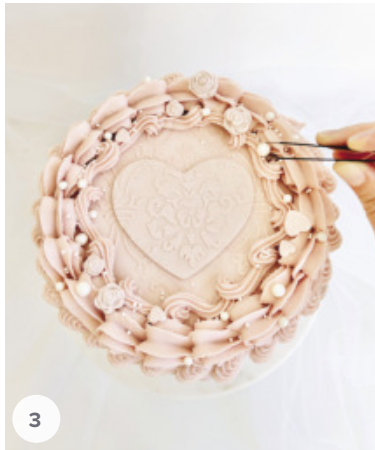
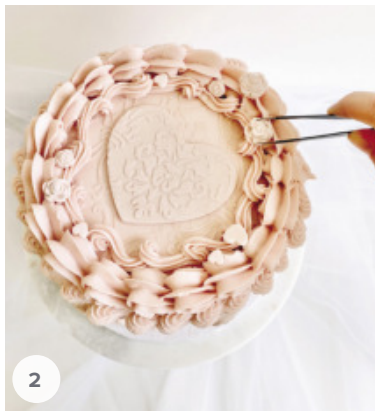


## ADD THE FINISHING TOUCHES

- Using round tip #3, pipe a small bead between the buttercream garlands. Just below it, add the smallest and second smallest fondant hearts with tweezers. Add a 1-inch fondant rose just under the #4B shell border where the garlands meet. Repeat for each section.
- Lightly brush the bottom of the stenciled fondant heart with water and place it in the center of the cake top, lining it up with the stenciling below. Add additional fondant roses as desired around the top and bottom borders of the cake.
- Sprinkle nonpareils around the top edges of the cake. Using tweezers, apply the pearls. If the buttercream has crusted, lightly brush with water in the areas you want to apply sprinkles. [ACD](#)

**Tip:** YOU CAN ATTACH THE FONDANT DECORATIONS WITH A SMALL AMOUNT OF FRESH BUTTERCREAM OR LIGHTLY BRUSH THE BACK OF THE FONDANT WITH WATER.

**Tip:** USE FONDANT PIECES TO HIDE WHERE YOUR PIPING ENDED.



## NATURAL DUSTY ROSE BUTTERCREAM

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups unsalted butter
- 7 cups sifted powdered sugar
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon whole milk

### INSTRUCTIONS

#### Method 1:

Add 1 teaspoon of fuchsia red and ¼ teaspoon of brown natural food coloring. If making more/less buttercream, maintain the 4:1 color ratio.

#### Method 2:

Use a mixture of fresh beet juice and sifted cocoa powder. If using beet juice, do not add any milk to the buttercream until after the color has been added because you may not need any.



# BUTTERMILK VANILLA BEAN CAKE

with Huckleberry Jam and Vanilla Bean Buttercream

BY LINDSEY JOHNSON

A classic vanilla cake with a Rocky Mountain twist, this is my most requested wedding cake flavor. I use a local huckleberry jam.

Makes one 3-layer 8-inch cake

LEVEL: 



Recipe excerpt from *Wild Sugar: Seasonal Sweet Treats Inspired by the Mountain West* by Lindsey Johnson and Chase Reynolds Ewald. Reprinted by permission of Gibbs Smith Books.

## BUTTERMILK VANILLA BEAN CAKE

- 3 cups cake flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 cup unsalted butter, room temperature
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup oil, canola, vegetable, or grapeseed
- $1\frac{3}{4}$  cups granulated sugar
- 4 extra large eggs, room temperature
- 2 extra large egg whites, room temperature
- 1 heaping tablespoon vanilla bean paste
- 1 cup buttermilk, room temperature

## VANILLA BEAN BUTTERCREAM

- 2 cups unsalted butter, room temperature
- 6 cups confectioners' sugar, sifted
- 3 teaspoons vanilla bean paste
- 4 tablespoons heavy cream, room temperature
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon kosher salt

## FOR ASSEMBLY

- 1 (8-ounce) jar huckleberry jam

## MAKE THE CAKE

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Butter 3 (8-inch) cake pans and line the bottoms with parchment paper. Dust the interior of the pans generously with flour, then tip over to knock out the excess, leaving a thin coating. Set aside.







- To make the cake, in a medium bowl, whisk together the cake flour, baking powder, and salt. Set aside. In the bowl of an electric mixer on high speed, beat the butter, oil, and sugar until light and fluffy, 3 to 5 minutes. It should look slightly paler in color and have no lumps. On low speed, add the eggs and the egg whites, 1 at a time. Add the vanilla bean paste. Beat on medium speed, until fully combined. Scrape down the bowl as needed.
- On low speed, add half of the dry ingredients to the butter mixture, mixing until fully combined. Then add half of the buttermilk, mixing until fully combined. Repeat with the remaining dry ingredients and remaining buttermilk, mixing until just combined. Scrape down the bowl and finish mixing with a rubber spatula. Evenly divide the batter among the cake pans. Bake on the center rack for 20 to 25 minutes, or until a tester inserted into the center of the cakes comes out clean. Allow the cakes to cool in their pans for 10 minutes before turning over onto a wire rack. Allow them to cool completely before frosting.

## MAKE THE BUTTERCREAM

- To make the buttercream, in the bowl of an electric mixer on high speed, cream the butter on until light and smooth, about 5 minutes. Add the confectioners' sugar, 1 cup at a time, mixing well after each addition. Scrape down the bowl. Add the vanilla



bean paste, heavy cream, and salt. Mix on medium-high speed for about 3 minutes, until fluffy and smooth. Using a rubber spatula or wooden spoon, stir by hand to remove any air bubbles.

## ASSEMBLE THE CAKE

- To assemble the cake, place 1 cooled cake layer, flat side facing down, on a cake plate or cake stand. Cover the top with a generous layer of buttercream. Add generous spoonfuls of huckleberry jam. Spread evenly over the top of the buttercream, leaving a 1-inch border around the cake edges. You don't want the jam leaking out of the sides.
- Place the second cake layer,

flat side facing up, on top of the frosted first layer. Fill the gaps between the cake layers with buttercream. Repeat the steps with the buttercream and huckleberry jam on the second layer.

- Place the final cake layer, flat side facing up. Fill the gaps between the cake layers with buttercream. Cover the top and sides of the cake with a thin coat of buttercream to lock in the crumbs. Place in the refrigerator and chill, uncovered, for 15 minutes.
- Remove the cake from fridge and, with an offset spatula, apply a generous layer of buttercream frosting over the entire cake, starting at the top and smoothing down and over the sides. ACD



AMERICAN  
**Cake**Decorating

GRAB A  
PRINT  
OR  
DIGITAL  
ISSUE!



[AmericanCakeDecorating.com/shop](https://AmericanCakeDecorating.com/shop)

# ARATI MIRJI

Get to know the esteemed sugar flower artist inspiring everyone around the world.



Hailing from Bengaluru, India, **Arati Mirji** is a globally acclaimed sugar flower artist whose expertise lies in the meticulous crafting of lifelike and authentically realistic sugar flowers, using edible flower paste as her chosen medium. Arati's boundless creativity shines through her continuous exploration of innovative techniques and materials in her craft. Arati is not only a skilled

artist but also a devoted mentor who wholeheartedly imparts her knowledge and experiences to inspire and empower aspiring sugar flower artists. For those looking to immerse themselves in the captivating world of sugar flower art or to witness Arati's masterful creations, her website offers an extensive collection of master classes and awe-inspiring works.

### **American Cake Decorating:**

What inspires you?

**Arati Mirji:** My forte is making realistic sugar flowers; hence, my primary source of inspiration for my creations is the natural world. I seek to replicate the intricate details found in real flowers to achieve lifelike results. By observing actual flowers, I learn about petal and leaf arrangements, proportions, size, coloring, and how flowers are distributed on a stem.

When real flowers aren't accessible, I turn to the internet, using various images to guide my work. Additionally, I find inspiration in still life paintings and photography, both old and contemporary, often using platforms like Pinterest for ideas. These visual references help me create stunning floral art that captures the essence of nature, even when working with artificial/edible materials.



**ACD:** You are such a master of gum-paste flowers. What made you decide to focus on them?

**AM:** I've always been inspired by the quote "The making of art is no different than prayer" by Rainn Wilson. It beautifully encapsulates the essence of my journey. My path to becoming a sugar flower artist was quite unexpected. At first, I scoffed at the idea of using sugar flowers for cake decoration, thinking no one would actually eat them. I even had a chance to learn it but turned it down during my City & Guilds diploma course.

However, fate had other plans for me. One day, I stumbled upon incredibly realistic sugar flowers online and I was captivated by their beauty and artistry. That moment changed everything, and I decided to pursue this as my calling. Working with flower paste now feels like an extension of



aratimirji.com  
facebook.com/arati.mirji  
instagram.com/arati.mirji



myself, a meditative and almost spiritual experience. It's like offering a prayer through my creations and it brings me immense joy. I'm grateful for the happiness it has brought into my life.

Crafting realistic flowers has earned me recognition and respect in the industry, setting my work apart. Do I ever regret the extra time and effort it takes? Absolutely not! Could I be truly happy without it? Definitely not! This is my passion and, as they say, a labor of love yields the best results. In the end, that's what truly matters.

**ACD:** What has been your biggest accomplishment so far?

**AM:** Among all the awards and accolades I've received, one stands out as the closest to my heart. In 2018, I had the incredible honor of being declared the winner in the



sugar flower category at the Cake Masters Magazine Awards. It's an annual event held in Birmingham, UK, and it brings together the finest artists from around the world, with around 75,000 participants. What makes this award particularly special to me is that I was not only recognized as the best in my category but also as the first Indian to ever win this esteemed accolade. It's a source of immense pride and honor for me, and it symbolizes the culmination of my dedication and passion for sugar flower artistry on a global stage.

**ACD:** What is your biggest piece of advice for new cake decorators getting into the industry?

**AM:** Cake decorating is a very labor-intensive art form, but it is equally rewarding. Do not compare your work with that of others. Everybody is at different stages »



in their journey through this beautiful world of cake decoration. Strive for excellence and success will definitely follow.

**ACD:** What are your future plans?

**AM:** I've got a flourishing schedule ahead! Following the Cake International show in 2023, the demand for my online tutorials has skyrocketed. My focus is on creating more tutorials, specializing in breaking down intricate flower-making techniques into easy-to-follow steps. The goal is to share my passion and skills, making it accessible for everyone. Two exciting hands-on master classes are lined up for The D'licious Magazine Awards show in the UK in February. It's an opportunity to dive into the art of sugar flowers with enthusiasts in a more intimate setting. So, my plate is full for the upcoming year, filled with tutorials, master classes, and innovative collaborations that blend the worlds of cake art and photography. Exciting times ahead! **ACD**

## JADE VINE CAKE COLLABORATION

Katja Ganesh, a family and portrait photographer, aims at preserving precious moments through her portraits. Katja and I had long wished to collaborate; however, scheduling conflicts often thwarted our plans. Unexpectedly, Katja reached out some time back, proposing a collaboration where I designed floral cakes

and she adorned our children with the same flowers, creating a wearable art interpretation. Our collaborative vision came to life through spirited discussions, resulting in a presentation that surpassed my expectations. Katja's artistic eye brought a unique flair to showcasing my work. [instagram.com/captured\\_by\\_katja](https://www.instagram.com/captured_by_katja)







# In Love with GARDEN ROSES

Is there anything more versatile than a classic garden rose?  
It's a year-round symbol of love.

BY VERONICA SETA

LEVEL: 

## COMPONENTS

### Edibles:

Gum paste: white and pale green  
(Satin Ice)

Petal dust: lemon yellow, ivory,  
autumn gold, Cornish cream,  
foliage green, pink, ruby, and  
brown (Sugarflair)

Egg white

Edible glaze

Semolina

Edible glue

Airbrush colors: green and yellow  
(Cassie Brown)

### Equipment:

Floral wire: 20 and 28  
(Hamilworth)

Small scissors

Cotton thread

Green floral tape

File

Paintbrushes (Cerart)

Rolling pin

5-petal rose cutters (Flower Pro  
by Katy Sue Designs)

Ultimate petal veiner (Flower  
Pro by Katy Sue Designs)

Ball tool

Plastic spoons

Paper towels

Rose calyx mold (Flower Pro by  
Katy Sue Designs)

Celboard

Rose leaf cutter (Flower Pro by  
Katy Sue Designs)

Leaf veiner (Flower Pro by Katy  
Sue Designs)

Aluminum foil

Airbrush

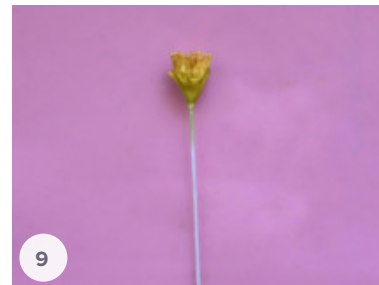
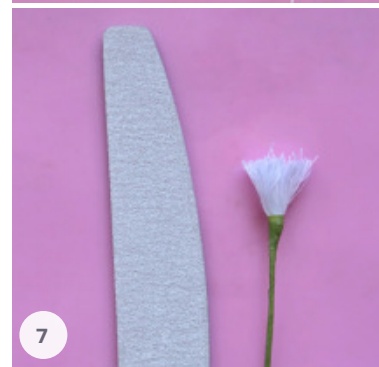
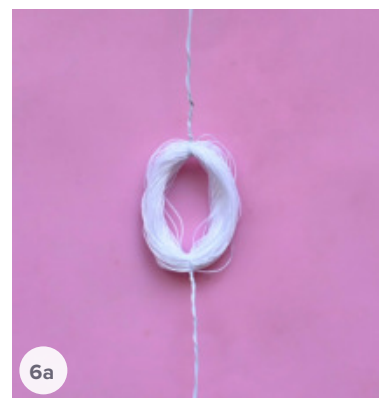
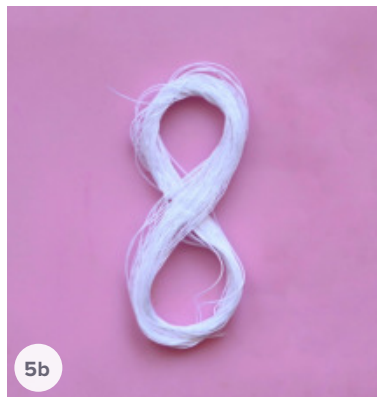
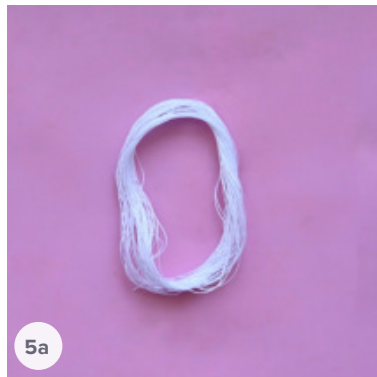
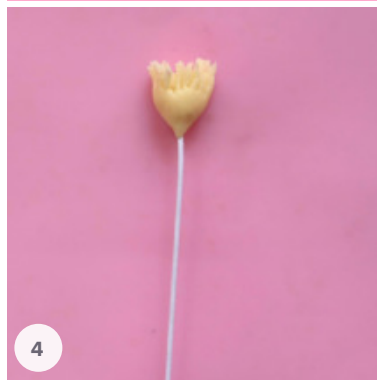
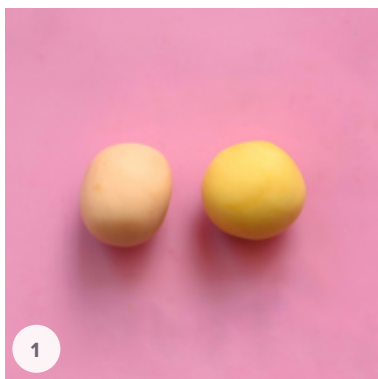
## CREATE THE CENTER

1. Roll 2 small balls of white gum paste, about 10 grams each, and color them with lemon yellow and ivory petal dusts, respectively. Then, blend them together.
2. Cut a 20-gauge floral wire in half and make a closed hook at the top of 1 end.
3. Roll a pea-size ball of the gum paste in the palm of your hand and then mold a cone shape for the center of the flower.
4. Spread a bit of egg white on the hook of the floral wire and insert it at the base of the small cone shape. To attach, smooth the paste at the base with your fingers. With a pair of small scissors, add texture to the pistil with fine cuts all around and on top of it. Let it dry for 24 hours.





5. Using 4 of your fingers slightly spread out, wind cotton thread around them 60 times. Twist the cotton circle into the shape of an 8 and then fold it in half to form a smaller circle.
6. Cut a 28-gauge floral wire in half. Attach the wires to opposite ends of the thread circle and twist them tightly. Then, cut the circle in half to create stamen.
7. Secure the thread bunches at the base of each with green floral tape, and then brush the cotton ends with a file to make them fluffy.
8. Dust the thread with autumn gold petal dust. Then, paint a bit of edible glaze onto the stamens and dip them in semolina.
9. Color the top of the pistil with a combination of lemon yellow and Cornish cream petal dusts. At the base, dust with a mixture of foliage green and autumn gold petal dusts. Spread a bit of glaze on the top of it and dip it in the semolina previously colored autumn gold.
10. Slide the stamens through the center of the pistil and attach the wires together with floral tape.





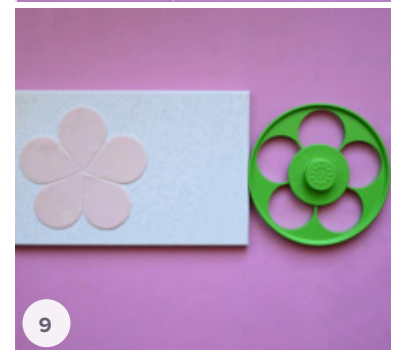
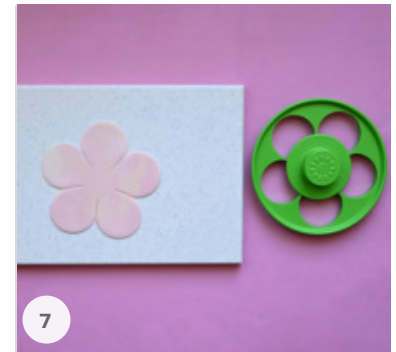
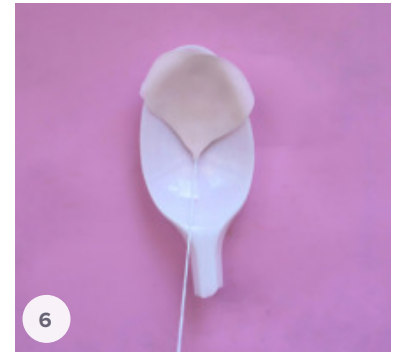
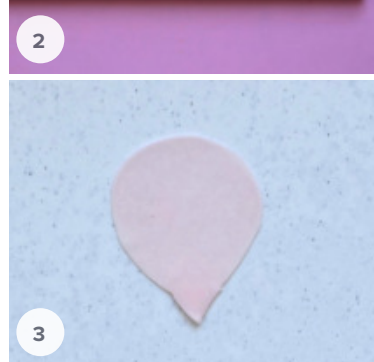


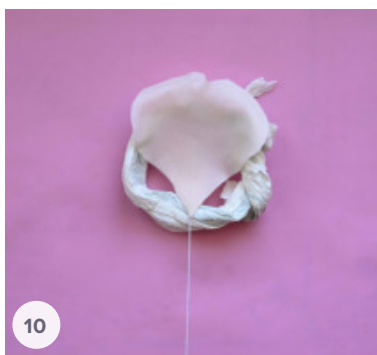
## FORM THE PETALS

1. Roll 1 larger and 3 smaller balls of white gum paste. Color the bigger ball with pink petal dust, 1 small in Cornish cream petal dust, and another small a lighter shade of pink. Leave the last ball white. Mix all 4 balls together to get a marbled effect.
2. Thinly roll out the gum paste with a rolling pin. Cut out a blossom with the smaller rose petal cutter, and then roll over it to enlarge and elongate it.
3. Cut the petals away from each other. Cut a 28-gauge floral wire into 4 pieces and insert 1 of them at the base of each petal.
4. Place each petal in the petal veiner and press to make indentations.
5. Thin the petal edges with a ball tool.
6. Place the petals on plastic spoons and curl the top edges outward. Leave them to dry for at least 9 hours.
7. Repeat Steps 1 through 5 with the medium rose petal cutter to form 9 petals.
8. Using small scissors, cut a V shape on the top of each petal to give it a heart shape.

Thin the top with the ball tool. Place the petals in plastic spoons to dry.

9. Repeat Steps 1 through 5 with the larger rose petal cutter to form 5 petals.
10. Cut strips of paper towel and make paper rings as formers. Place the larger petals on them and curl the top of the petals outward. Allow to dry for at least 9 hours. »



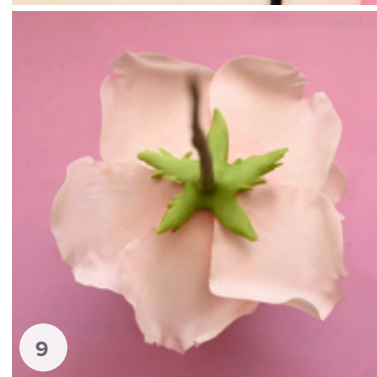
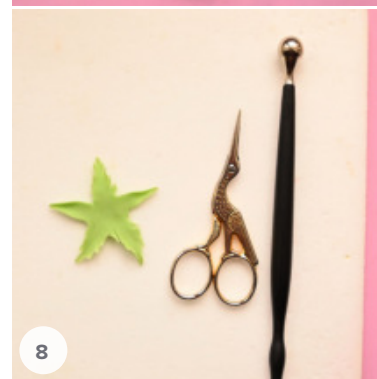
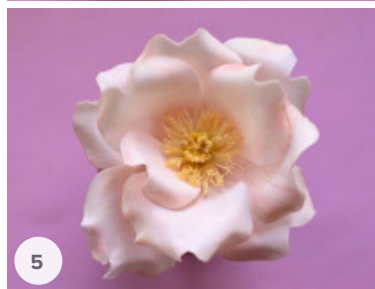
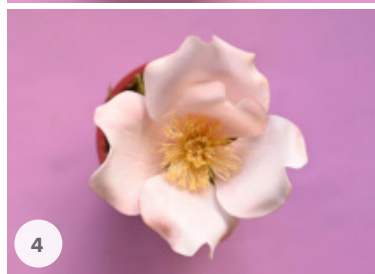
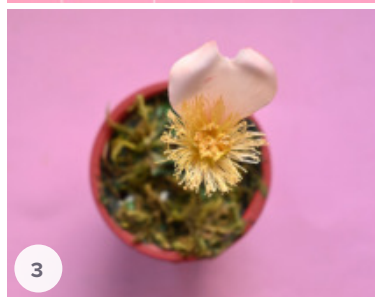


## BUILD THE FLOWER

1. Prepare your petal dust colors (pink, ruby, brown, and Cornish cream) on a piece of paper towel.
2. Using a dry brush, apply Cornish cream petal dust to the inside base of the petal. Apply various tones of pink, ruby, and brown petal dusts at the top of the petal. Always brush from the top toward the inside to get a natural graduation of color.
3. Attach the smallest petals to the flower center with floral tape.
4. Continue attaching 4 medium petals.
5. Attach another layer of 5 medium petals.
6. Finally, assemble the larger 5 petals in a third layer, manipulating them gently to fold inward and give the flower a natural shape. Dust the back base of the rose with a bit of ruby petal dust.
7. Press a small ball of pale green gum paste into the calyx mold. Flex the mold and remove it.
8. Soften the calyx edges with the ball tool and cut them with

small scissors. Dust the calyx with a mix of foliage green and autumn gold petal dusts.

9. Brush a bit of edible glue in the center of the calyx and attach it at the base of the rose.



## ADD THE LEAVES

1. Roll a sausage shape with pale green gum paste. Roll over the sausage shape with a small rolling pin on a Celboard. Cut 2 small rose leaves and 3 bigger leaves

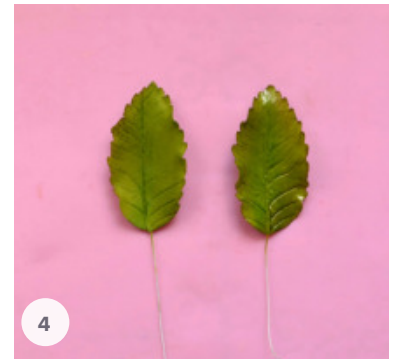
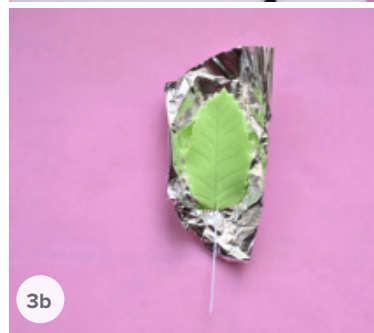


with the leaf cutter. Insert 28-gauge floral wires in each.

2. Put the leaves in the leaf veiner and press.
3. Thin out the edges of the leaves with the ball tool. Leave them to dry on pieces of aluminum foil.
4. When dry, airbrush the leaves with a mix of green and yellow. When that color is dry, dust their edges with ruby and brown petal dusts. Glaze them to set.
5. Cut a 20-gauge floral wire into 3 pieces and wrap 1 in floral tape. Assemble the leaves, starting with the 2 small and then the 3 bigger. Dust the floral tape with foliage green petal dust
6. Attach the rose to the leaves with floral tape. Go up and down 3 times with floral tape to get a stronger hold. Dust the floral tape with foliage green and a bit of ruby petal dusts. ACD



**Tip:** REMEMBER TO REMOVE THE EXCESS COLOR FROM YOUR BRUSHES TO AVOID SPOTTING THE GUM PASTE WHILE DUSTING.



**Veronica Seta** is a multi-award-winning cake artist from Naples, Italy. She is most known for her stunningly realistic sugar-flower arrangements and classic design aesthetic. Veronica enjoys sharing her passion for cake artistry with others and travels internationally to teach at cake shows. She is an ambassador for many companies in the industry and has been featured in many notable cake magazines and blogs.



facebook.com/veronica.seta.33  
instagram.com/veronica\_seta

# BIRDS OF PARADISE

This cake is inspired by my visit to Jurong Bird Park in Singapore, where I was surrounded by colorful birds and the gorgeous variety of the flower appropriately called bird of paradise.

BY MEGHA  
KWATRA MADAN

LEVEL: 

## COMPONENTS

### Edibles:

Wafer paper

Petal dust: lavender, violet, dusty rose pink, bright pink, kiwi green, dark forest green, eucalyptus, egg yellow, and burgundy

Cake

White fondant

Piping gel

### Equipment:

Feather printout

Scissors

Flat paintbrushes

18-gauge floral

Pearl headpins



WHAT  
YOU  
NEED

## FORM THE FEATHERS

1. Print and cut out feather shapes to use as templates.
2. Cut the wafer paper into strips and use the templates to cut out feather shapes.
3. Create small edges on the wafer-paper edges to give more details. Make 150 wafer-paper feathers of each size.

Photo by: Kaustubh Kale



**Megha Kwatra Madan** is an internationally acclaimed Indian

cake artist who offers couture cakes and cake decorating classes to all the aspiring bakers across the globe. She has received various awards and accolades for her exceptional cake designing skills, including Wedding Cake Artist 2023 and Rising Star Advance 2023 by the Asia Cake Oscars. This dentist turned cake artist from Delhi, India, believes in making people fall in love with the process of baking and cake designing.



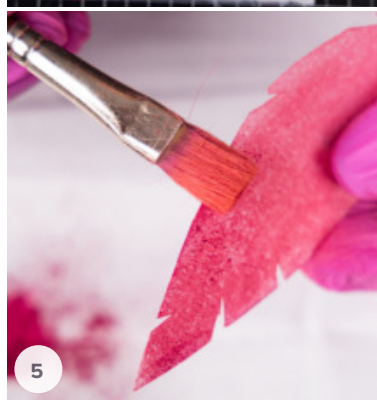
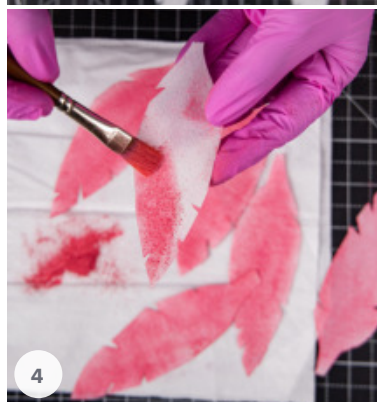
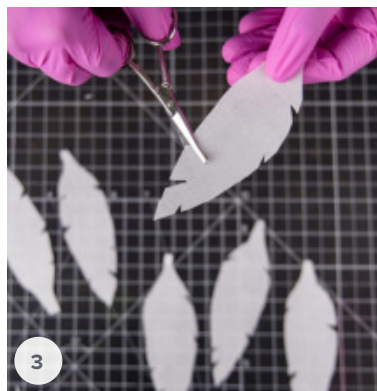
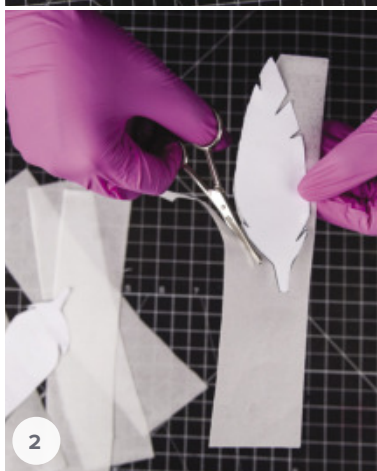
facebook.com/Cakeoluv  
instagram.com/megha\_kwatra\_madan







4. Using various petal dust colors and flat paintbrushes, dust both sides of all the feathers.
5. To give more depth, dust the edges with darker tones. For the lavender feathers, dust with violet. For the dusty rose pink feathers, dust with bright pink. For the kiwi green feathers, dust with dark forest green. For the violet, eucalyptus, dark forest green, and egg yellow feathers, dust with burgundy.
6. Arrange the bundles of similar sizes and colors. Each bundle will have 5 to 9 feathers.

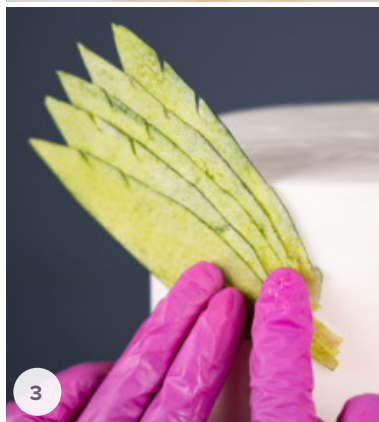


## DECORATE THE CAKE

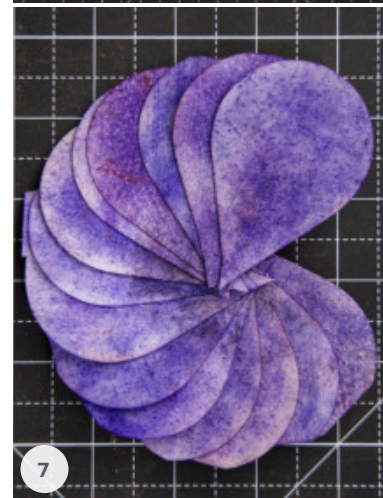
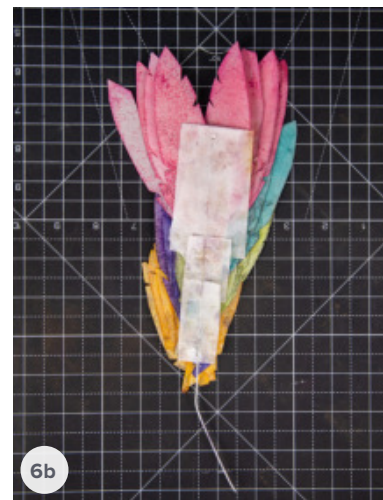
1. Cover the cake with white fondant.
2. Arrange and overlap 5 to 7 similar in size and in color feathers and glue them together with piping gel.
3. Attach the feather bundle to the top edge of the cake with piping gel.
4. Continue the same method with different in size and in color bundles, with the new bundle covering half of the bundle behind it to create depth.
5. Arranging the bundles in a circular manner, cover the whole cake.
6. Make some flying feather elements by arranging feathers and attaching them onto an 18-gauge floral wire supported with wafer paper on the back. Allow them to dry for half an hour before inserting them into the cake.



7. Prepare and color some teardrop-shaped petals the same way the feathers are prepared. Arrange and glue them in a circular fashion with piping gel.
8. Place the teardrop bundle in the center of the feather design. Use pearl headpins to secure the bundles until it dries and then remove them. **ACD**



**Tip:** YOU CAN USE THIS SIMPLE METHOD TO DECORATE IN A VARIETY OF ARRANGEMENTS.







# GALENTINE'S

**Photographers:** Mitchell England, Abby Judd, Sarah Doyle **Stylists:** Davis and Brittany Bussio **Venue:** Plated Dreams, Bountiful, UT



**AW,  
GALENTINE'S  
DAY!** It's the day where you get together and celebrate with your best girlfriends. But when cake besties get together for Galentine's Day brunch, you know things are going to be a bit sweeter.

Mandy Clifford invited other talented cake and sugar artists to join her for a fully edible brunch, where everything is actually cake and sugar, even down to the plates! The restaurant that hosted this event is known for its flower walls, so Mandy not only challenged her friends to make fully edible brunch dishes but also edible sugar flowers that they could pluck off the decor and eat too!

RaChelle HubsSmith, from Bake and Decorate, made a steak and eggs brunch cake. The steak was made of red velvet cake to give the appearance of a medium rare steak when cut into. The parsley was made from wafer paper. The pad of butter was made from candy melts. The eggs were made with fondant that was torched on the edges and covered with gelatin. The rose was made with Nicholas Lodge FlexiPaste.

Kariann Rugg, from Cake Dame, made a devil's food croissant cake. It was covered in Satin Ice fondant and torched to give a realistic appearance. The plate and mug were made out of

EVERYTHING  
IS EDIBLE,  
EVEN THE  
FLOWERS!

# DAY BRUNCH





ADD  
SPARKLING  
DRINKS &  
YOU'VE GOT  
A PARTY!

fondant and airbrushed to replicate the dishes at the restaurant. The banana slices and blueberries were made out of gum paste, and the ranunculus flower was made from wafer paper.

Tatiana Bartholomew, from Aspen Cake Design, made a French toast cake topped with fondant berries, a side of sugar-torched fondant bacon, and buttermilk syrup in a fondant dish, all on top of a white fondant plate. Both sugar flowers—a Juliet garden rose and peony—were made from gum paste.

Mitzi Torgersen created royal icing sugar cookie toast and avocado, toast and jam, and pancakes topped with blueberries made of edible chocolate and isomalt syrup. Don't

forget the hand-painted over-easy royal icing egg all on top of a sugar cookie plate! All of this was fancied up with a wafer-paper ranunculus flower.

Mandy Clifford, of Mandy's Custom Cakes, made an eggs benedict cake with a side of Satin Ice fondant roasted potatoes and Simi isomalt and fondant fruit, all atop a white chocolate plate. Mandy's open rose was made with Sugarin flower paste and dusted with Sugarin edible dusts. Mandy also made a cake purse accessory covered in Satin Ice fondant.

Kimberley Rivers, from Cakes in the City Utah, made pink velvet pancakes and a croissant sprinkled with berries, all made from fondant then drizzled with an isomalt syrup and buttercream whipping cream on top of blue and white fondant plates. She also made sugar flowers out of gum paste to perfectly match the beautiful floral backdrop.







YOU CAN  
EVEN EAT  
THE CUPS &  
PLATES!



Amy Michelle Goff, from Frosted Custom Cakes, made a waffle brunch cake topped with berries and syrup with a side of eggs, sausage, and coffee. The plates and coffee cup were made with gum paste, hand-painted, and glazed. The waffles, berries, eggs, and sausages were made of fondant, hand-dusted, and painted. The syrup was made of isomalt, and the coffee was made of chocolate cake and Swiss meringue buttercream. The peonies were made

of Nicholas Lodge FlexiPaste.

Emerlie Miller, of Neo Sugar Rush, made a realistic quiche dish paired with fresh fruit and a yogurt bowl. The quiche dish has a dark chocolate aluminum foil shell, plus a baked sugar cookie for the crust, and is filled with raspberry swirl cake covered with painted and torched Satin Ice modeling chocolate and wafer-paper accents. The plate, bowl, and spoon are sculpted dark chocolate coated in cocoa butter. The peaches are made

with Satin Ice modeling chocolate and wafer-paper leaves. The yogurt bowl is filled with raspberry swirl cake and is topped with white ganache for the yogurt, rice cereal treats for the oats, gum-paste blueberries, Satin Ice modeling chocolate strawberries, and fondant blackberries. The dishes are paired with cotton candy Italian macarons and sugar flowers. The flower vase is dark chocolate painted with cocoa butter and filled with gum-paste flowers. **ACD**

# SWEET SMARTPHONE PHOTOS

Are you looking to take your business to the next level? Do you want to stand out from your competitors in 2024? One of the most effective ways to achieve this is by taking great photos of your sweet creations. But don't worry, you don't need expensive equipment to take professional-looking photos. Your smartphone is more than capable of capturing stunning images of your



**Irenea Aristigueta** is a chef, food photographer, and founder of Florida Bakers Club based

in Tampa, FL. Chef Irene shares her knowledge of food photography with bakers and treat makers to help them showcase their brand with confidence. She graduated from culinary school in 2010 at the top of her class from the Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale. Like many of you, her first love is baking, but her passion is photography.



floridabakersclub.com  
facebook.com/floridabakersclub  
instagram.com/floridabakersclub

desserts. Here are five tips to help you elevate your visual marketing game and attract more customers this year.

## 1. KEEP IT CLEAN

We use our phones all the time, and they can easily get smudged or dirty. To avoid blurry photos, make sure your camera lens is clean. Use a microfiber cloth or cotton shirt to clean your lens and you'll get a clear photo that makes your desserts look even more enticing.

## 2. FIND GOOD LIGHTING

Good lighting is key to taking great photos. Natural light is your best friend, so try setting up your desserts near a window to capture the best lighting. Soft, diffused light will make your desserts look more appetizing.

## 3. CHOOSE A BACKDROP

Choosing the right backdrop is essential for enhancing the colors and textures of your desserts. Neutral tones like white or beige work well to make your desserts stand out, while different textures and materials like wooden boards, marble surfaces, or patterned fabrics can add depth and interest to your photo.



## 4. EXPERIMENT WITH ANGLES

Don't be afraid to experiment with different angles to capture the details of your desserts. Taking photos from different angles can help showcase the texture of your desserts and make them look even more delicious.

## 5. ADD COMPLEMENTARY PROPS

Props like utensils, fresh ingredients, or serving plates can help create a story around your desserts and make them look even more appealing. Choose props that complement the theme and style of your creations and harmonize with the colors of your desserts to create a visually pleasing image.

By following these simple tips and tricks, you can take professional-looking photos of your desserts with just your smartphone. These photos can help your business stand out on social media and attract more customers. So, what are you waiting for? Start snapping those photos and watch your business grow! **ACD**





# LOVE BUGS

This tiny little love story has big possibilities thanks to a crafty quilling wafer-paper technique.

BY AAISHA SUMBUL



**Aaisha Sumbul** is an award-winning cake artist, chocolatier, sugar florist, and the owner

of Choconest and Edible Bouquet. Previously based in Nairobi, Kenya, she won several awards in The Cake Festival Cake competitions. Aaisha is the brand ambassador for the Cake Collective of India and East Africa. She loves hosting cake collaborations that have societal messages like women's rights and tribal culture. She has taught many international demos, classes, and workshops on her forte, sugar flowers. Aaisha owns a line of food-grade brass stamps called Impressions by Aaisha Sumbul, and she routinely gets featured internationally for her work and tutorials in different magazines and newsletters. Aaisha is also the Kenyan Cake Festival Igniting Skillshare Ambassador.



facebook.com/ashisumbul  
facebook.com/Choconests  
facebook.com/impressionsbyaaishasumbul

LEVEL: 

## COMPONENTS

### Edibles:

Wafer paper  
Airbrush colors: red and black  
Water  
White fondant  
Cupcakes  
Edible black marker

### Equipment:

Airbrush  
Ruler  
X-Acto knife  
Wooden skewer or quilling tool  
Paintbrush  
Rolling pin  
Round cutter

## CREATE THE QUILLS

1. Airbrush the wafer paper with both red and black.
2. Using a ruler and an X-Acto knife, cut the wafer paper into strips.
3. Using a wooden skewer or a quilling tool, attach the end of 1 strip of wafer paper. Make sure it's nice and snug, then start twirling the tool away from you. The paper should wrap around, making a coil.
4. To make a heart, pinch 1 side of the coil of red wafer paper to make a small teardrop shape. Make 2 and then attach them with a small amount of water on a paintbrush.
5. For making the head and thorax of an ant, pinch 1 side

*Tip:* YOU CAN USE FLAT BRUSHES TO COLOR WAFER PAPER TOO.



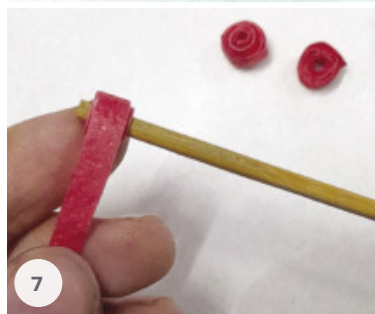
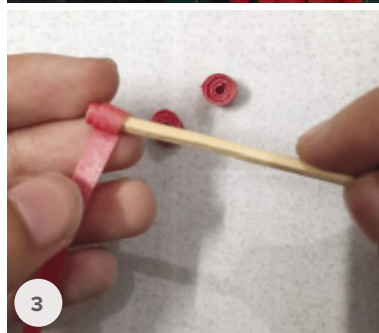
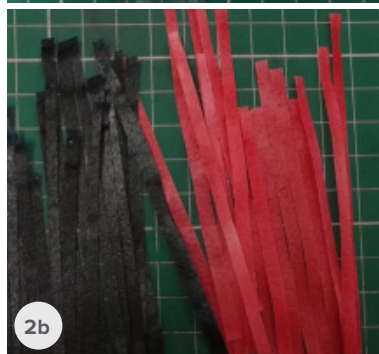
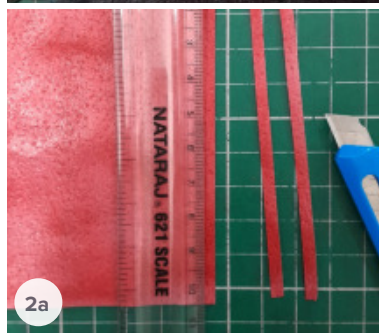




of the coil made of black wafer paper to make it a teardrop or petal shape. Repeat to make 2 per ant.

6. To complete each ant, make a small round coil with black wafer paper.

7. To make a rose, quill a small coil of red wafer paper.



## COMPLETE THE CUPCAKES

1. To make cupcake toppers, roll out some white fondant and cut it with a small round cutter.
2. Arrange the wafer-paper quilling coils on each cupcake topper with the help of paintbrush. Add a small circle of wafer paper for the eyes.
3. Add details such as antennas, pupils, legs, and grass to each cupcake with edible black marker. ACD





# PEACH FUZZ



Pantone's 2024 color of the year is a velvety gentle peach shade that evokes warm and cozy vibes.



Sweet as a Peach Cake Topper, \$17, etsy.com



Peach Cookie Cutter, \$4, etsy.com



Sand Dollar Icing Sheets, \$8, evilcakegenius.com



Rose Gold Sprinkles, \$11, fancysprinkles.com



Roxy & Rich Peach Blush Hybrid Petal Dust, \$7, bakedeco.com



Set of 3 O'Creame Peach Dahlia Gum-Paste Flowers, \$26, ocreme.co



Add white to adjust the shade.



Satin Ice Peach Petal Vanilla Fondant, \$12, bakedeco.com



6-Cavity Peach-Shaped Cake Mold, \$12, amazon.com



Estelle Colored Glass Cake Stand, \$225, westelm.com



Peach Cupcake Wrappers, \$3, etsy.com



Peach Oil Blend Food Color, \$8, colourmill.com.au



Classic Chef Apron, \$40, reluctantthreads.com

# BROMMBEER

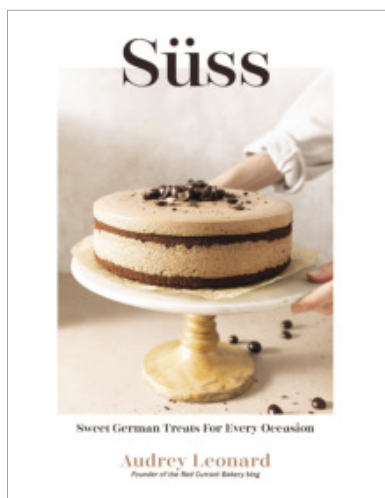
BY AUDREY LEONARD

# MOHNTORTE

(BLACKBERRY POPPYSEED CAKE)

Serves 8 to 12

LEVEL: 



Reprinted with permission from *Süss: Sweet German Treats for Every Occasion* by Audrey Leonard. Page Street Publishing Co. 2023. Photo credit: Audrey Leonard.

I saw a version of this cake on my last trip to Germany and knew I had to re-create it. The original was made with a cassis layer on top, which is a black currant liqueur, but for a light and alcohol-free version, I thought blackberries would be the perfect alternative. One of my

favorite parts about many German cakes are the fruit layers made with fresh, seasonal fruit. They add so much flavor and brightness to the overall cake and create the perfect combination of textures.

This cake is relatively simple with just two layers—the base is a thick poppy seed cake with a hint of lemon and the top layer is pureed blackberries, set with gelatin and brightened with a little lemon juice. This cake can be made at any time of the year, but something about it just screams spring and summer to me.

## POPPYSEED CAKE

1¾ cups (210 grams) cake flour  
 1¾ cups (350 grams) granulated sugar  
 ⅔ cup (85 grams) all-purpose flour  
 2½ teaspoons baking powder  
 ¼ teaspoon fine salt  
 ¼ teaspoon baking soda  
 1 cup (240 grams) heavy cream, at room temperature  
 ⅔ cup (150 grams) canola oil  
 ¼ cup (65 grams) well-shaken buttermilk, at room temperature  
 3 large eggs, at room temperature  
 1 tablespoon vanilla extract  
 4 cups (360 grams) sweetened

shredded coconut  
 1 recipe Honey and Almond Cream Cheese Frosting

## BLACKBERRY LAYER

225 milliliters (¾ cup + 3 tablespoons) water, divided  
 14 grams (1 tablespoon + 1½ teaspoons) powdered gelatin (2 packets)  
 750 grams (5 cups) frozen blackberries (or mixed berries), defrosted  
 50 grams (¼ cup) sugar  
 15 milliliters (1 tablespoon) lemon juice  
 50–75 grams (3–5 tablespoons) berry jam

## MAKE THE POPPYSEED CAKE

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F (177°C) and place a rack in the center of the oven. Melt the butter in the microwave in short bursts or in a sauce pot on the stove. Set the melted butter aside. Sift the flour, cornstarch and baking powder together in a small bowl.
2. In the bowl of stand mixer, crack in all four eggs and





*Note:*

This cake is best stored in the refrigerator, so it isn't great for transporting long distances. If you do need to bring it somewhere, leave the cake collar on for stabilization until you arrive at your destination and then peel it off. Don't worry if some of the blackberry topping runs down, it will still be beautiful and delicious!

add in the lemon zest, sugar and salt. Using the whisk attachment, mix on high until the mixture is very light and frothy—this should take 3 to 5 minutes and the eggs should be butter-colored. Turn the mixer down to medium-low speed and slowly stream the melted butter into the egg mixture, pouring it down the side of the bowl so that it doesn't hit the whisk while the mixer is running. Mix until everything is just combined.

3. Pour the sifted dry ingredients into the bowl and use the whisk attachment by hand to gently fold the dry ingredients in. This should be more of a folding motion, not stirring. Once the flour is almost completely mixed in, pour in the poppyseeds and repeat the same mixing process. If necessary, use a rubber spatula to finish mixing and scrape the bottom and sides of the bowl.
4. Line a 9-inch (23-centimeter) springform pan (a 9-inch metal cake pan will work too) with a baking spray that includes flour—just be sure to not overspray it or let much come up the sides of the pan. Alternatively, you can lightly grease the base with butter and then lay a circle of parchment paper on top. Pour the cake batter into the pan, tap twice on the counter to level it out and then place the cake in the preheated oven. Set the timer for 20 minutes.
5. After 20 minutes have passed, rotate the pan 180 degrees and bake for another 10 to 15 minutes, until the cake is golden brown and a toothpick

inserted in the center of the cake comes out clean. Once baked, remove the cake from the oven and place on a wire rack to cool for at least 10 to 15 minutes. Then, run a knife along the edge, between the cake and the pan, to make sure that it didn't stick anywhere and then release the springform.

6. Leave the cake to cool fully to room temperature and then wrap it in plastic and store it in the refrigerator until it is cold and you are ready to assemble the cake.

## MAKE THE BLACKBERRY LAYER

1. In a large bowl, add in 100 milliliters ( $\frac{1}{4}$  cup +  $1\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoons) of cold water and sprinkle over the 14 grams (1 tablespoon +  $1\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons) of gelatin. Stir to combine and set aside. Pour the defrosted blackberries with 125 milliliters ( $\frac{1}{2}$  cup + 1 teaspoon) of the water into a high-powered blender. Blend until smooth. Pour the blended mixture into a sauce pot and add in the sugar and lemon juice. Heat until the mixture is bubbling, stirring regularly to keep it from burning.
2. Once bubbles start to appear (this should take about 10 minutes), turn the heat off and pour the blackberry mixture into the bowl with the bloomed gelatin. Stir the gelatin into the blackberry mixture using a rubber spatula.
3. If you aren't in a hurry, the bowl can sit at room

temperature with you stirring every 10 to 15 minutes so that the mixture cools evenly and no clumps form. If you want to move the process along, create an ice bath by placing the bowl into a larger baking dish with tall sides and adding ice and water into the baking dish around the bowl. This means you will need to stir the mixture frequently, but it will also cool down much faster.

4. Using a long serrated knife, cut off the top of the poppyseed cake so that the top is level and flat with the top edge of the sides. Find a plate or tray that is larger than the cake and lay a sheet of plastic wrap on it. Lay the cake, with the trimmed side facing up, on the sheet of plastic. Tape an acetate sheet/collar around the cake nice and tight. If you have an adjustable cake collar, I recommend still using acetate within it and then having the collar to reinforce it.
5. Spread the jam over the surface of the cake all the way to the edges, this will help seal any gap between the cake and acetate. Wrap the edges of the plastic wrap up around the acetate or cake collar. Place the cake on a shelf in your refrigerator. Once the blackberry mixture is fully cooled, use a small ladle to carefully pour the blackberry mixture over the jam layer. Leave the cake to set, in the refrigerator, for at least 24 hours. Once set, carefully peel the acetate collar off the cake. Use a long sharp knife to cut the cake into 8 or 12 slices depending on preference and clean the knife between each slice. **ACD**



March 9<sup>TH</sup>-10<sup>TH</sup>, 2024

# SWEET ART MASTER

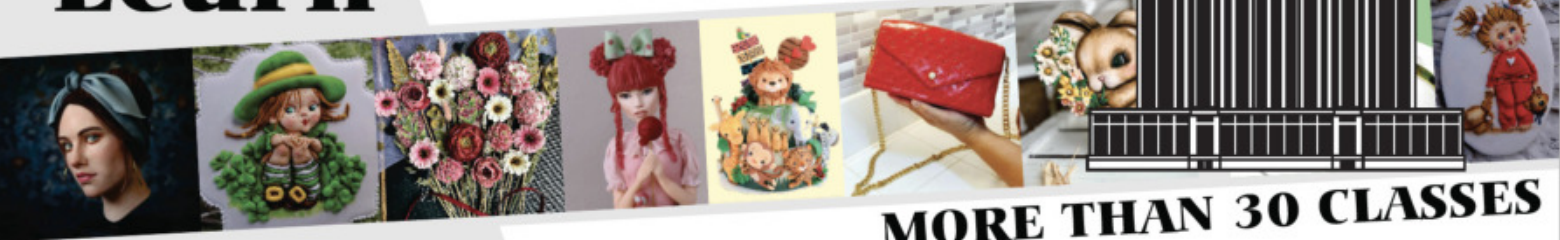
SUGAR SHOW & CAKE COMPETITION

NEW YORK

Hosted at **INDUSTRY CITY**



**Learn**



**MORE THAN 30 CLASSES**

**Compete**

for more than  
in cash and prizes

**\$15,000**



**Enjoy**

watching free demos, participating in challenges,  
shopping at the vendor hall, meeting with friends

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT  
[www.sweetartmastershow.org](http://www.sweetartmastershow.org)



# CAKE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

BY CYDNI N. MITCHELL

In 2023, artificial intelligence (AI) was the talk of the internet. You may have shrugged off the “AI is the future” headlines that came across your news feed last year, but what if I told you AI isn’t just for tech geeks and big corporations? Instead, AI is a low-cost (and sometimes free!) tool that can be your business’ secret weapon in 2024 and beyond.

You already know that running a cake business can be very demanding, but with the help of AI tools, you’ll be able to work more efficiently and get more done. This article will serve as your backstage pass to the ways AI can be your sidekick in the cake game. It’s not just about spicing up your design process—it’s about making your business run like a well-oiled, frosting-covered machine. From snagging design inspo to conquering social media, AI is about to become your baking BFF.

## ADD A DASH OF AI MAGIC TO YOUR DESIGN PROCESS

Consider looking for AI design tools that can unlock a treasure chest of inspiration. Keep in mind that AI tools don’t just generate text. There are tools that also create images based on your specifications. Thanks to clever algorithms, AI can serve up suggestions for designs that are

as unique as they are innovative, including recommendations for patterns, themes, and colors. Provide your AI bestie with your clients’ preferences and see what it comes up with. Then, make suggestions to refine the design until you come up with a concept that both you and your customer love. Imagine the impact on your wedding cake

business! No longer will you have to create a cake sketch by hand. You can generate design options using AI tools, show them to your clients for feedback, and then use them as a guide when creating the actual cake.

## SAVE TIME WITH AUTOMATED TASKS

On top of creating stunning designs, AI technology can also help you save valuable time by automating various tasks in your business. Automated inventory management systems can track your supplies and send you an alert when it’s time to order essential cake decorating materials. You can also use AI tools to answer customer service questions on your social media or website without any extra daily work on your part. Appointment scheduling, email communications, and order management are all tasks that can be handled by AI automation. Offloading administrative items to your AI bestie will allow you to focus more on the creative aspects of your business while ensuring smooth operations and timely delivery of your custom orders.

## GENERATE ATTRACTIVE MARKETING CONTENT

With AI-powered design tools, you can easily create eye-catching visuals and graphics to showcase your products, highlight your baking expertise, and promote your cake





designs. Typically, these tools offer a wide range of customizable templates and design options tailored specifically for the baking and cake decorating industry, allowing you to easily create professional-looking marketing materials. Whether you need to design social media posts, website banners, or promotional flyers, AI can provide you with the tools and resources to create visually appealing content that captivates your audience and elevates your cake brand.

### SPICE UP YOUR PRODUCT DESCRIPTIONS

Many cake designers struggle to find the right words when describing their designs or products. Worrying about repeating words or phrases is common when writing isn't your thing. The good news is that AI can be the creative spark you've been missing. AI tools can generate engaging and personalized narratives for each of your cakes that can be used on both your website and in social media posts.

Keep in mind that describing your cakes is not just about listing ingredients. Your audience enjoys hearing the story behind each cake. Beyond the design aesthetic, the story can help attract potential customers. With AI, your product descriptions will become more than a basic list. They will become

an avenue to enhance the customer experience by allowing potential clients to virtually taste the flavors, feel the textures, and immerse themselves in the artistry and passion that you pour into every cake you design.

### EXPLORE NEW OFFERINGS

Ever feel like your menu needs a fresh perspective? AI can also spark creativity when it comes to discovering fresh flavors. If you're looking for practical ways to shake things up, try prompting AI with statements such as "share innovative cake flavors for summer" or "generate a list of unique twists on classic desserts." With prompts like these, AI will respond with a range of ideas to help you uncover exciting flavor combinations that perfectly suit your cake business. Why stress yourself out trying to be innovative in the kitchen when there are tools available to get the ideas flowing? Oh, and don't forget to ask it to generate the associated recipes.

As we begin this new year, open yourself up to the opportunities that might come your way in the next 12 months. Keep in mind that even if you don't have the budget to hire a new staff member, you have access to online tools that can be just as helpful. Integrating AI into your business can be a beautiful collaboration between tradition and

technology where the possibilities are endless. So, cheers to the New Year and a future where your cake business thrives thanks to the help of AI! | ACD



**Cydni N. Mitchell**  
(a.k.a. Cyd) is a bakery consultant and the sweet business coach behind Sweet Fest®. Based in Atlanta, GA,

Sweet Fest® is an online company that supports the business needs of the sweets community in the areas of professional development, marketing, branding, and web design. By trade, Cyd is an accountant and financial analyst with a master's from the Kenan-Flagler Business School at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is the co-founder of the Sugar Coin Academy, an online business academy for business owners in the baking and sweets industry, and she is also the organizer of The Ultimate Sugar Show, Georgia's largest annual baking and sweets expo in Atlanta.



thesweetfest.com  
facebook.com/thesweetfest  
instagram.com/sweet\_fest

## UNVEILING THE SECRETS OF

CAPEZZOLI  
DI VENERE

BY SCOTT BRADSHAW

**In the realm of culinary delights,**

there exists a confection that has tantalized taste buds and sparked intrigue for centuries. Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to introduce you to capezzoli di venere, a sophisticated Italian truffle that has left a lasting impression on the world of gastronomy. This indulgent treat has a rich history and a flavor that will make even the most discerning palates swoon. So, let's dive into the captivating tale of capezzoli di venere.

**RIPPLE OF GENIUS**

Legend has it that these sumptuous truffles were first crafted by the culinary gods themselves, who

sought to create a dessert fit for the goddess of love herself, Venus. The combination of chestnuts and chocolate, meticulously blended into a velvety smooth texture, is a testament to the artistry of Italian confectioners. It's a delicate dance of flavors that will transport you to a realm of pure indulgence.

Now, let's address the cinematic connection that brought capezzoli di venere into the modern spotlight. You may recall the iconic film *Amadeus*, which chronicled the life of legendary composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. This delectable treat made a cameo appearance in the movie, capturing the attention of audiences worldwide. While traditional capezzoli di

venere has a chocolate coating, in the movie they show a white/light pink coating. It's no wonder Mozart himself was inspired by such a divine creation!

But let's not dwell on the movie alone; let's savor the truffle's allure. As you take your first bite, the smooth chocolate exterior gives way to a luscious chestnut filling that dances on your taste buds. It's a symphony of flavors, a harmonious blend of sweetness and nuttiness that will leave you craving more. Each bite is a journey of pleasure, a moment of pure extravagance that will make you feel like royalty.

**PERK UP THE RECIPE**

As you savor each truffle, let your imagination run wild. Picture yourself in the heart of Italy, surrounded by the enchanting beauty of the countryside. The aroma of freshly roasted chestnuts fills the air, mingling with the scent of rich, dark chocolate. It's a sensory experience that transports you to a world of indulgence, where time stands still and every bite is a moment of pure bliss.

For my version, I have used



**Scott Bradshaw** is the owner of sevenravensbakehouse.com, an entertaining blog which strives to get people to look at food and recipes in a twisted way ... as twisted as an old phone cord. Scott grew up in Texas, and has lived in Arizona, Nevada, and Missouri. He makes Plainville, MA, his home these days with his saintly husband and a bossy little Pomeranian.



sevenravensbakehouse.com  
tiktok.com/@goosecaboose70





**Tip:** THESE TREATS STORE WELL, AS LONG AS THEY ARE COOL.



a roasted mixed nut puree. Chestnuts and chestnut puree can be hard to find and expensive, while any good roasted mixed nut blend can easily be found, and it makes for a delicious truffle. Just make sure they are roasted and unsalted. I also updated the splash of alcohol used in the truffles. Instead of the traditional brandy, I've used a smoked bourbon butterscotch mixture. Mix up enough for the recipe and a couple of martini glasses and serve them together. I used Goldschläger for the cinnamon liqueur because I'm Gen X. None of that weak Fireball for us. We drank our cinnamon with bits of gold, walking uphill, in the snow.

I used a variety of chocolates to dip the truffles in. The caramel

sea salt from Trader Joe's was especially delicious, but if it's not in season, try butterscotch morsels. My recipe uses a smoky chipotle powder to give a bit of a burn at the end. Add as much as you want. Taste as you go along to set your spice level. I used white chocolate morsels to top the truffle and to cover up the toothpick hole where I dipped the truffles. Use luster dust in a variety of colors to make them festive. I chose pinks, reds, and purples for Valentine's Day but added a few blue and gold ones for fun. I'm sure the original creators of this recipe would scream at my methods, but they would also scream at a food processor because they had no electricity. Work smart not hard.

In the end, capezzoli di venere is a testament to the power of inspiration in culinary artistry. It's a reminder that food must be more than sustenance; it must be an experience, a moment of pure pleasure. Embrace the sophistication, relish the flavors this Valentine's Day with someone special, and let capezzoli di venere transport you to a world where indulgence knows no bounds.

## SMOKED BOURBON BUTTERSCOTCH MARTINI

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 ounce butterscotch schnapps
- 1½ ounces bourbon
- ½ ounce half-and-half
- 1 ounce cinnamon liqueur
- 1 ounce Frangelico

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Mix together and use for the recipe. Drink the rest.

## CAPEZZOLI DI VENERE

### INGREDIENTS

- 18 ounces mixed roasted, unsalted nuts
- ½ cup sugar
- ¼ cup Smoked Bourbon Butterscotch Martini, brandy, or dark rum
- 2 teaspoons chipotle powder
- 8 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 12 ounces chocolate chips, plus more for decorating
- Chocolate, for coating
- Coconut oil

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Pulse the nuts in a food processor, until well combined. Add the sugar, alcohol of your choice, chipotle powder, and butter. Pulse until well combined. Add the chocolate and pulse until it is melted and looks like a truffle.
2. Using a silicone half-sphere mold for the perfect size, a portion scooper, or your hands, roll small balls of the mixture and arrange them on a baking sheet.
3. When the centers are set, stick a toothpick in the center of each and proceed to dip the truffles in the melted chocolate of your choice. Thin the chocolate out a bit with coconut oil so it doesn't get gloppy. Refrigerate until set.
4. Remove the capezzoli from the refrigerator and cover the toothpick hole with a chocolate chip morsels. Serve! ACD





# DRIED

BY SERI LOPEZ

# WINTER FLORALS

Using dried flowers provides endless possibilities! Connect with your local florist to find the best available blooms no matter the season.



After years of working in environmental engineering and education—IT careers and running her

own Pampered Chef business, **Seri Lopez** took a cake-decorating class and her new career began. She was certified by taking classes at local cake-decorating supply shop in 2002, made her first wedding cake in 2004, and started her business in 2006. She honed her skills in sugar art through master classes under very well-known sugar artists over the years. She has been a Food Network competitor and a winner at both the Oklahoma State Sugar Art Show and Oregon State Fair. She loves making cakes and working with her hands to create.



[seriouscake.com](http://seriouscake.com)

[facebook.com/SeriousCakecom-155812504431839](https://facebook.com/SeriousCakecom-155812504431839)

[instagram.com/seriouscakecom/](https://instagram.com/seriouscakecom/)

LEVEL: 

## COMPONENTS

### Edibles:

Various fresh flowers and leaves

Cakes

Buttercream

### Equipment:

Parchment paper

Paper plate

Paper towel

Microwave

Tweezers

## DRY THE FLOWERS

1. Before you begin, rinse the flowers. Do not trim the flowers just yet.
2. Place a few flowers, stems, or leaves face side down onto

parchment paper and then onto a paper plate. Cover the plate with a piece of paper towel or parchment paper to lightly flatten them and place it in the microwave.

3. When using a microwave, be aware that there are different settings and watts, so be careful here as you can catch your flowers on fire in the microwave. I microwaved my flowers in 15- to 30-second intervals, checking them between each to see if they finished drying.

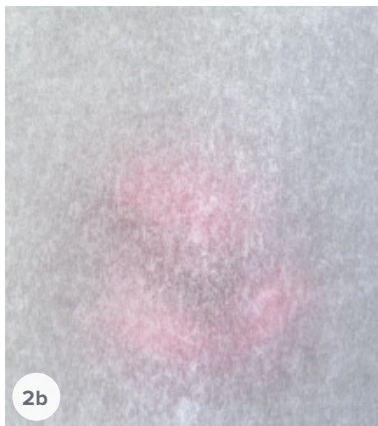


**Tip:** YOU CAN ALSO USE A DEHYDRATOR OR HANG FLOWERS TO AIR-DRY.







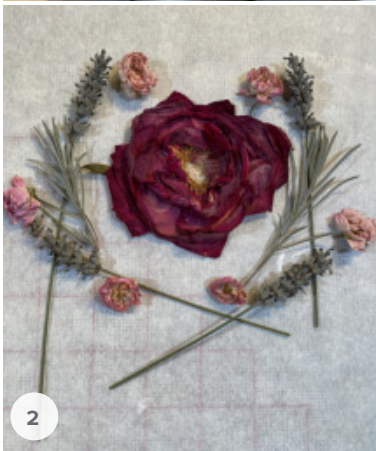


*Tip:* IF A FLOWER LOSES COLOR FROM DRYING, YOU CAN USE GEL FOOD COLOR, EDIBLE MARKERS, OR EDIBLE SPRAY TO COLOR THEM.





















## DECORATE THE CAKE

1. Frost and stack your cakes with buttercream.
2. Place your flowers onto parchment paper and arrange them ahead of time into a design you like before placing them onto your cake.
3. Place the flowers onto the cake. If you're placing flowers onto a fondant- or ganache-covered cake, use melted chocolate on the back of your flower and a little freeze spray to secure it. You could also use royal icing and pin the flower until it dries. For all other coverings like buttercream, you can just apply the flowers directly onto the cake.
4. Once you have applied the design, use tweezers to place extra smaller flowers and leaves to bring fullness to the design. ACD





## EDIBLE FLOWERS TO CONSIDER

	Camellia		Honeysuckle
	Cape jasmine		Lilac
	Cornflower		Magnolia
	Dahlia		Nasturtium
	Freesia		Pansy
	Forget-me-not		Peony
	Fuchsia		Pink
	Gladiolus		Rose
	Hibiscus		Scented geranium
	Hollyhock		Sunflower

## POISONOUS FLOWERS TO AVOID

Bluebell Clematis Daffodil Foxglove  
 Hydrangea Larkspur Lily-of-the-valley  
 Oleander Poppy Rhododendron

# MELANIE LEWIS

Our associate publisher, Ania Munzer, recently got married! We're thrilled to not only give you a sneak peek at her cake, but to introduce you to her talented wedding cake designer too.



Melanie Lewis is an unexpected cake artist—not that she doesn't have the pedigree, of course. After graduating from culinary school, she worked as a pastry chef for ten years for some highly respected establishments. But she specialized in plated desserts and never felt cakes were her forte. "I didn't mind building the cake," she explained, "but I didn't like decorating."

But when she decided to open her own shop, The Perfect Piece Sweets Co., it was her sister who convinced her that she needed to decorate the cakes. And so, her journey began. "Once you cut the fear out of it, it was

pretty cool. And so I just went from there, and I was just like, cake was it!" she said. At first, she specialized in celebration cakes, and was only introduced to the wedding cake world about two years ago.

Lewis leaned into making mini dessert tables for weddings, which could showcase her skills and offer a variety of options. But after a feature in *Minnesota Bride* and a few styled photo shoots, the interest in her cakes took off. And now, she does both cakes and dessert tables. "A really cool way to do wedding sweet treats is to have a variety of desserts," she noted.

Her way of attracting clients is through a take-home tasting box. What began as a necessity during the COVID-19 pandemic quickly became



**Melanie Lewis**, a native Minnesotan, was first introduced to baking through her grandmother Mable who was a baker in New York. She received a culinary arts degree from the Art Institute International of Minnesota and a baking and pastry degree from Johnson & Wales University. Melanie has ten years of fine dining restaurant experience specializing in pastries and desserts. She has worked for some of the most prominent Twin Cities chefs and created dessert menus for James Beard Award recipients Chef Tim McKee (La Belle Vie), Chef Isaac Becker (Bar La Grassa), and Chef Gavin Kaysen (Spoon and Stable). She also consulted at Barquette and was the interim pastry chef at Dakota Jazz Club and Restaurant. In 2015, Melanie decided to take a leap of faith and launch The Perfect Piece Sweets Co., redefining old-school desserts. She supports local farmers and vendors to ensure the freshest ingredients for maximum taste. Melanie believes that if it's not made from scratch, then it's not the perfect piece.

 [perfectpiecesweets.com](https://perfectpiecesweets.com) [facebook.com/PerfectPieceSweets](https://facebook.com/PerfectPieceSweets) [instagram.com/sweetstheperfectpiece](https://instagram.com/sweetstheperfectpiece)





Cake photos provided by Sara Tucker Photography

a fan favorite. The boxes were packed with various flavors in really pretty packaging, complete with plates, forks, and napkins. Clients began tagging her on social media to showcase the box, and so even when life began to feel normal again, she kept the concept. “People can take them home and share it with more than just their intended,” she said, making it a more social experience with friends and family.

Lewis works from inspiration provided by the client and collaborates with them to create a unique look for each. She avoids covering cakes in fondant, and prefers to stay away from

---

**“I’m always looking to learn different things,” she explained, noting that if a new technique fits her aesthetic, she’s going to focus on that to offer rather than something trendy.**

---

trends that don’t work within her own personal style. But that doesn’t mean she doesn’t look to expand her skills. “I’m always looking to learn different things,” she explained, noting that if a new technique fits her aesthetic, she’s going to focus on that to rather than something trendy.

Now that she’s got a bustling cake business, Lewis is focusing on expansion. Up first is a new line of artisan chocolate truffles, harkening back to her restaurant days. She hopes that will open the door to more corporate clients supplementing her business when it’s not peak wedding cake season. And, hopefully soon, a large brick-and-mortar location will follow.

So, stay tuned, fellow cakers! This pastry-chef-turned-cake-artist has a sweet future ahead, and we’re excited to see what 2024 and beyond have in store. **ACD**

# The PURRFECT COUPLE

Create a cute scene of cats in love for Valentine's Day.

LEVEL:



## COMPONENTS

### Edibles:

Fondant: grayish-brown, white, blue, brown, and peach

Various dry powder paints

White gel food color

### Equipment:

Rolling pin

X-Acto knife

Modeling tools

Paintbrushes

Plastic knife

Needle

## WHAT YOU NEED



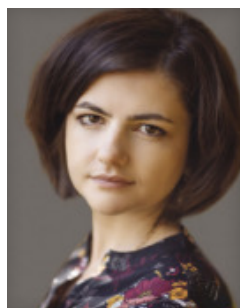
## MOLD THE CATS

1. Roll a piece of grayish-brown fondant into a teardrop shape. Roll another piece of fondant into a sausage shape and divide it into 2 equal

BY MARIANNA CHUMAKOVA

parts. Attach the 3 parts to form the cat's body. Use an X-Acto knife to sculpt the silhouette.

2. Roll another ball of fondant and attach it to the neck. This will be the base of the cat's head.
3. Using modeling tools, sculpt the cat's face. The gentleman cat's head is turned toward the lady cat, so take this into account when modeling the head and positioning the eyes, nose, and ears. Model the approximate outline of a cat's head and smooth it to the neck. Make indentations in the middle of the head for the eyes.
4. Roll out a long fondant sausage and bend it at a 90-degree angle for the arm. Using the X-Acto knife, outline the paw.
5. Place this arm on the cat's body and smooth it. Add volume in the shoulder, neck, and chest area, then add a second paw.
6. Repeat Steps 1 through 5 for the female cat, but make her a little smaller.
7. For the legs of the cats, roll out sausage shapes and thin them out on 1 end. Bend them at the knees and allow them to stabilize before attaching them to the bodies.
8. Add white fondant into the eye sockets to form the eyeballs.



**Marianna Chumakova** is from Ukraine. She is educated in logistics, works in real estate, and is a confectioner and decorator. She is an honored member of the Cake Artist World association, a gold and silver winner of numerous confectionery competitions, and a participant in various international collaborations. For inspiration, she writes poetry and composes fairy tales. Marianna dreams of her own pastry school, skydiving, and swimming with dolphins. She has a wealth of knowledge in cake decorating. Three-dimensional cakes are her love, her passion, and what she lives for right now.



[instagram.com/unicorn\\_artcakes](https://www.instagram.com/unicorn_artcakes)

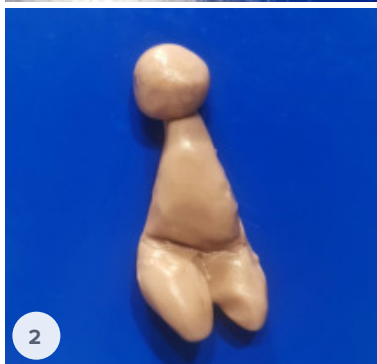
[facebook.com/profile.php?id=100011356036544](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100011356036544)



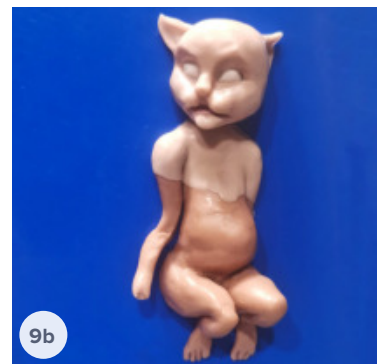
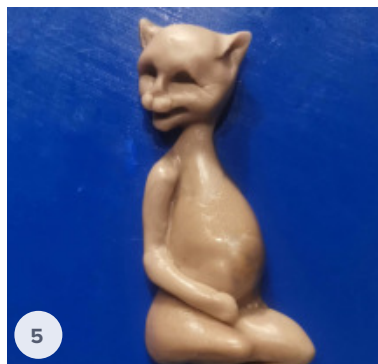




9. Thinly roll out fondant and apply to the head, neck, and chest of each cat. This technique helps hide all the irregularities and smooth out the joints. This layer should follow the previously defined contours and give the cats' faces a prettier outline.



**Tip:** LOOK AT YOUR FIGURE FROM DIFFERENT ANGLES BECAUSE IT WILL BE EASIER FOR YOU TO SEE YOUR MISTAKES AND CORRECT THEM IN A TIMELY MANNER.



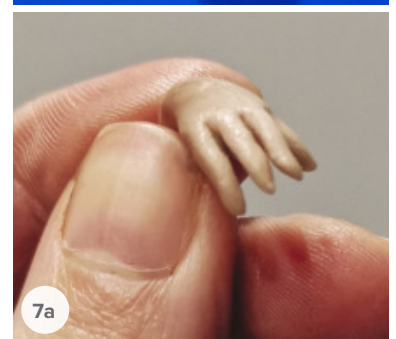
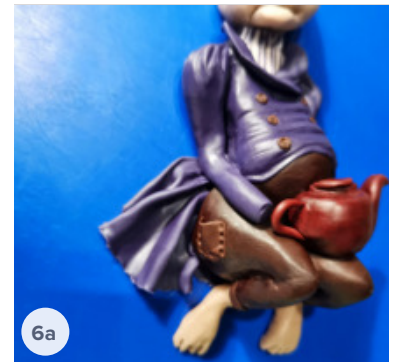
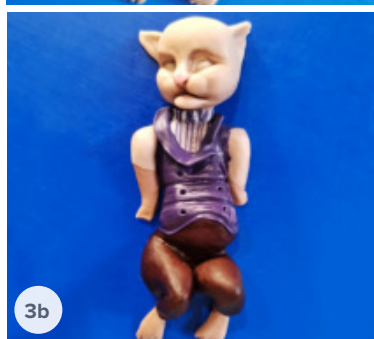
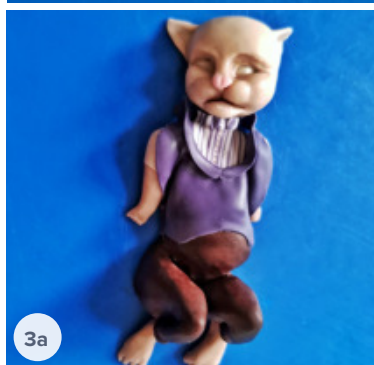
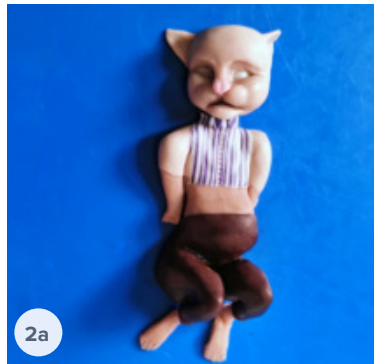
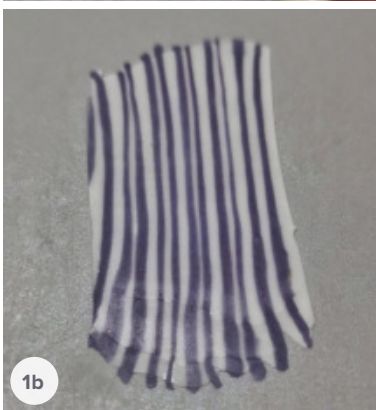
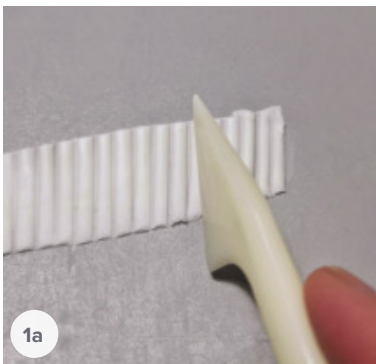
### ADD THE GENTLEMAN CAT'S DETAILS

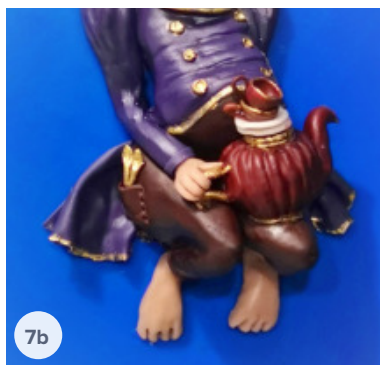
1. To make the striped shirt, thinly roll out a piece of white fondant. Mark small vertical stripes in the fondant evenly spaced without cutting it. Roll out thin strips of blue fondant and place them in the prepared recesses. Roll the resulting layer with a rolling pin to flatten and then attach it to the cat.
2. Roll out brown fondant into a thin layer and carefully wrap it around the bottom portion of the cat to form pants. Finish the hem of each pant leg by adding piping. Work out the hind legs in detail, model the toes, and give the feet the necessary bend.
3. Roll out more blue fondant for the jacket. To simulate a collar, cut a piece of fondant with an arc in the top directed toward the lower part of



the body and a smaller arc in the bottom directed to the opposite side. Leave the top arched edge free so you can wrap it in the shape of a collar. Mark stitches on the jacket and outline a double row of buttons.

4. Roll out more blue fondant for the bottom of the coat. Fold it like an accordion. Roll 1 side with the rolling pin to make the edge thinner to attach to the cat.
5. Make the sleeves by rolling out more blue fondant and cover the arms.
6. Add final details like a teapot to hold, a pocket on his pants, a frilled collar over his shirt, saucers, cups, and teaspoons.
7. Having placed all the necessary details, model the hands and attach them to the sleeves. »

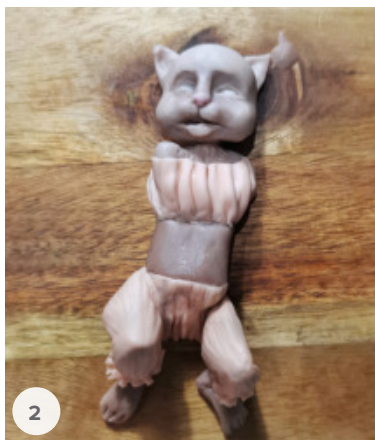
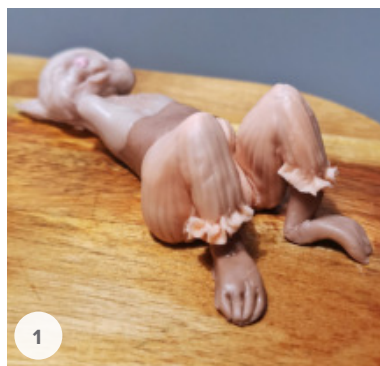




## CREATE THE LADY CAT'S DETAILS

1. Carefully wrap each leg in peach fondant to form leggings. Using a plastic knife, add a striped texture and add ruffles.
2. Roll out peach fondant and fold it like an accordion to form the top of the dress.
3. Add an underskirt and an overskirt in peach fondant.
4. Mold the cat's hands and place them on top of the dress. Add a pleated sleeve, a contrasting blue belt, and a bow around the neck.

**Tip:** USE A PLASTIC KNIFE TO CREATE THE TEXTURE OF THE DRESS FOLDS.



## FINISH THE CATS

1. Use a thin needle to draw the fur. Pay attention to the direction in which the fur grows.
2. Using the shading method, color the cats with various dry powder paints. Add

shadow where necessary, in all recesses and folds, and add blush to the cheeks.

3. Draw the eyes. Remember that the pupil is partially hidden by the eyelids and is not completely visible. For realism, the upper part of the pupil should be darkened and the lower should be highlighted.
4. Add pink tongues and highlight the created fur texture with white gel food color and a fan brush. [ACD](#)











Are you attending or competing this year?  
We want to hear all the delicious details!



**Sweet Art Master Sugar Show  
& Cake Competition**  
March 9–10  
Brooklyn, NY

For the first time ever, Julia Fedorova is hosting a show in New York! Learn from more than 30 classes, complete for over \$15,000 in prizes, and enjoy watching free demos, participating in challenges, shopping, and meeting with friends and other cakery.

For more information, visit [sweetartmastershow.org](http://sweetartmastershow.org).



**SoFlo Cake & Candy Expo**  
April 26–28  
Miami, FL

Going on its eighth year, South Florida is home to the largest and most interactive cake and candy expo. In its short existence, SoFlo Cake & Candy Expo has already proven to be one of the most dynamic and engaging events for cake and candy industry professionals, enthusiasts, and hobby bakers. It is the trendsetter for offering a shopping and learning

experience during one weekend like no other show! Join us and be a part of the industry's most high-powered and influential cake and candy convention.

For more information, visit [soflocakeandcandyexpo.com](http://soflocakeandcandyexpo.com).



**Jersey Shore Cake & Cookie  
Convention**  
September  
West Long Branch, NJ

The Jersey Shore Cake & Cookie Convention is an event where attendees can meet with industry leaders, shop supply vendors, enter a competition, learn new skills, and connect with other like-minded people. Whether you are a professional, novice, or never made a cake before, this two-day event at the iconic Jersey Shore promises to be an experience everyone can enjoy! Exact dates in 2024 are still pending, so stay tuned!

For more information, visit [jerseyshorecakeshow.com](http://jerseyshorecakeshow.com).



**Cake International**  
November 1–3  
Birmingham, England

Cake International is the original and world-leading competition for the sugarcraft community, attracting thousands of entries



each year! Cake enthusiasts must experience this unique event that brings together the latest trends and supplies, cutting-edge workshops and demos, and the world-famous Cake International competition display.

For more information, visit [cakeinternational.co.uk](http://cakeinternational.co.uk).



### Cake Fiesta Manila November 14–17 Manila, Philippines

Cake Fiesta Manila prides itself on being the first and the biggest international cake show in the Philippines! The show boasts the top cake artists from around the globe, who will share their skills and expertise to thousands of aspiring cakkers and bakers. Of course, this show is not just for bakers or cake decorators. Anyone who loves making cakes, who's interested in learning about making and decorating cakes, or just simply likes to eat cakes, come celebrate! Participate

in amazing demos, classes, live decorating competitions, and more!

For more information, visit [cakefiestamanila.com](http://cakefiestamanila.com).

Have the 4-1-1 on other cake shows in 2024? Send us a message at [annmarie@americancakedecorating.com](mailto:annmarie@americancakedecorating.com) with more details. **ACD**



# Tag us in Your Photos!

FOR A CHANCE TO BE FEATURED  
ON OUR INSTAGRAM FEED



@americancakedecorating AMERICAN CakeDecorating



# WORLD CAKE DESIGNERS CHAMPIONSHIP

BY JEAN A. SCHAPOWAL



On October 16 and 17, 2023, Reva Alexander-Hawk and I had the opportunity to represent the USA at the FIPGC

(International Federation Pastry Ice Cream Chocolate) Cake Designers World Championship in Milan, Italy. The event is held every two years and runs over the course of a week, with two other competitions taking place as well.

The competition is eight hours long and consists of your large display cake—which you create at home and bring to the competition assembled before the start of the timed competition—a smaller cake where you will reproduce the techniques used on the larger cake, and three tasting cakes. The tasting makes up 30 percent of your overall score. The theme for this year’s competition was “Music of our Nation.”

I had qualified for the competition back in 2019 by finishing first place in a qualifying event at the Ultimate Sugar Show. The U.S. delegation usually picks three to four finalists who







will then go into a final round to pick the representative. That final round consisted of a video, the design of your proposed cake, the tasting recipe, and a portfolio of your work. I was first runner-up out of three finalists. With the pandemic, the event was put on hold for a bit. When the show announced its return, the U.S. representative stepped down and I was then offered the chance to go.

This was also the first year that competitors were allowed to work with an assistant, which is how Reva Alexander-Hawk came on board. Once I was offered this chance, I asked her and she said yes! And I can't forget to acknowledge our amazing coach, Susan Trianos, whose years of experience were so incredibly helpful. Due to the short notice (most teams have already been working on their designs for months), we only had 10 months to raise all the funds necessary.

Nothing is paid for, so you need to make all paid arrangements like airfare, lodging, transportation, and materials, plus practice and work on the larger display cake.

We held numerous fundraising events like raffle tickets on donated gift baskets, an online raffle for a weekend of paid-for demos taught by fellow cake artists and friends, sales of T-shirts, etc.

After all the stress, trial and error of recipes and techniques, bookings, phone calls, and sleepless nights, the day finally arrived! The logistics of it all is mindboggling as there is so much to take into consideration: how to get things there, checklist and after checklist, what we need to bring, what we can leave behind, what we can purchase there, getting from point



A to point B. My mind never shut down! Sleeping and eating took a back seat most days, and I had Post-it notes all over my house with things to do! It is another level of competition from your typical cake show. We do not have anything like this in the States and the closest we ever had was the Oklahoma Sugar Art Show. Everything needs to be clean, precise, and perfect.

After all was said and done, I was super proud of our piece. We worked so hard to make people back home proud and to get everything to Italy with no damage and ready for competition. The response we got from our design was awesome and, honestly, we couldn't have



done it without the help of our cake community, donations from industry vendors, local donations, and word of mouth! It's an awesome feeling to have so much support behind you.

The event was one to remember and we made so many new friends from fellow competitors. When you can compete with others who share the same passion, it makes for an unforgettable experience. Again, I was super proud of what we were able to accomplish given the time frame. We placed eighth, and I was so happy with that. It was an experience to remember, and I will cherish the memories! [ACD](#)

# CONFETTI CAKE



BY JENNY HARTIN

Try this easy and festive recipe from the pages of *101 Things to Do with a Bundt Pan*.

Makes 10 to 12 servings

## Ingredients

### CAKE

- 2 cups flour
- 1½ cups sugar
- 4 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 eggs, room temperature
- 1 cup buttermilk, room temperature
- ¾ cup sour cream, room temperature
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- ⅓ cup sprinkles

### FROSTING

- ½ cup unsalted butter, softened
- 2 cups powdered sugar
- 2 to 3 teaspoons milk
- ½ cup sprinkles

## Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Prepare a 12-cup Bundt pan with nonstick baking spray.
2. In a large bowl, add flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt; whisk to combine. In a medium bowl, add eggs, buttermilk, sour cream, oil, and vanilla; whisk to combine. Add the wet mixture to the dry, stirring lightly with a spoon or folding with a spatula until just combined. Small lumps will be present; don't overmix. Gently stir in the sprinkles.
3. Spoon the batter into the prepared pan and bake for 40–50 minutes (start checking after 40 minutes), or until center is set and a toothpick inserted in the center of the cake comes out clean. Cool in pan 10 minutes before inverting onto a wire rack; cool for 15 minutes.
4. To make the frosting, beat the butter, powdered sugar, and milk together until smooth. Stir in the sprinkles and spread over cooled cake. [ACD](#)



Excerpted from *101 Things to Do with a Bundt Pan* by Jenny Hartin. Copyright 2023. Published with permission from Gibbs Smith.





**CAKE  
CASTING  
CALL!**



# WE WANT TO PUBLISH YOU!

**Tick one thing off your bucket list in 2023:  
Get yourself published in a leading world cake magazine.**

Getting published raises your profile and helps to showcase your skills, and personality, which can lead to all kinds of exciting opportunities, including teaching at international shows, online tutorial commissions, brand ambassadorships, and more.

The first step is easy: Simply get in contact with our editor to discuss which submission opportunities are open, You Made It! themes coming up, and what ACD can do for you.

**Get in touch: [annmarie@americancakedecorating.com](mailto:annmarie@americancakedecorating.com)**



# Get the **CONTENT** You **CRAVE**

Every issue of **American Cake Decorating** magazine is filled with the **latest** cake decorating info that our readers **want**—bringing new ideas, techniques & skills through step-by-step tutorials, themed showcases, new product information & more.

ACD **inspires creativity** by giving all of its readers access to top-level talents from around the world!

**SUBSCRIBE NOW** 



AMERICAN  
**CakeDecorating**

[americancakedecorating.com](http://americancakedecorating.com)