

CREAM CHEESE FROSTING

MAKES ENOUGH TO FROST A 9-INCH LAYER CAKE

This is my go-to icing that's always a crowd pleaser. The smooth, creamy texture with a slight tang from the cream cheese brings a great balance to any cake.

2 packages (8 ounces each) cream cheese, at room temperature

1/4 pound (1 stick) unsalted butter, at room temperature

2 vanilla beans, split lengthwise

1 1/2 cups confectioners' sugar

In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the cream cheese and butter together on medium speed until smooth. Scrape in the vanilla seeds, add the sugar, and beat until smooth. Store in the fridge for up to 4 days, sealed in an airtight container. Bring the icing to room temperature before using.

INSIDER TIP • USED VANILLA BEANS

After you've used vanilla seeds in a recipe, you can save the vanilla pod, which still has a lot of flavor, and add it to a canister of sugar to make vanilla sugar. You can also use it to make your own [vanilla extract](#), or add it to an existing batch of vanilla extract if you happen to have one going already.