

# FRENCH BUTTERCREAM

MAKES ENOUGH TO FROST A 9-INCH LAYER CAKE

French buttercream is by far the richest of the buttercreams with its use of egg yolks. A hot sugar syrup cooked to the soft ball stage thickens and “cooks” the egg yolks before butter is beaten in.

**SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:** candy thermometer

1 cup sugar

1/4 cup water

5 large egg yolks

1/2 pound (2 sticks) unsalted butter, cubed, at room temperature

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

In a small, deep saucepan, combine the sugar and water. Bring to a boil. Continue to cook the syrup over medium heat until the temperature reaches 238°F.

Meanwhile, in a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, whip the yolks on high speed to the ribbon stage (see Insider Tip, below).

Once the syrup has reached 238°F, reduce the mixer speed to low and slowly pour the hot syrup down the side of the bowl (not onto the whisk) into the yolk mixture. Continue to whip until the mixture is no longer steaming. At this point, start adding the butter slowly. Whip on medium-high speed until it comes together. Beat in the vanilla.

## **INSIDER TIP** • RIBBON STAGE

“Ribbon stage” describes what happens when egg yolks or a combination of yolks and sugar are whipped together. When they reach their full volume potential, they have reached the “ribbon

stage.” To check, lift the whisk in the air; the mixture should fall back into the bowl in a ribbon that loops back and forth on top of itself.