

SWISS BUTTERCREAM

MAKES ENOUGH TO FROST A 9-INCH LAYER CAKE

This frosting is based on something called Swiss meringue (see ["Buttercreams"](#)) and produces a lovely frosting for decorating (see ["Decorating with Icing"](#)).

4 large egg whites

1 cup sugar

$\frac{3}{4}$ pound (3 sticks) unsalted butter, cubed, at room temperature

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

In a double boiler, whisk the egg whites and sugar together until they are very hot to the touch and all the sugar has dissolved.

Pour the mixture into a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment and whip on medium speed until the mixture comes to medium peaks. Add the butter a cube at a time and whip until everything comes together. Beat in the vanilla. Increase the mixer speed to high and beat until the buttercream is fluffy.

VARIATIONS

Chocolate Buttercream: Melt 4 ounces semisweet chocolate chips (about $\frac{2}{3}$ cup) in the microwave. Add all the melted chocolate at once, at the very end, after the buttercream has been whipped to fluffy.

Espresso Buttercream: Add 1 tablespoon instant espresso powder along with the egg whites and sugar in the double boiler before heating. Strain the mixture into the bowl of a stand mixer and proceed with the recipe.