

tea&  
talk



## Tea & Talk Red Velvet



### Ingredients:

2-3/4 cups Plain flour  
2 cups granulated sugar or evaporated cane juice  
1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder  
2 tsp baking soda  
1 tsp salt  
1-3/4 cups plain nondairy milk (e.g., soy, hemp, almond, rice; not reduced fat varieties)  
1 cup vegetable oil  
2 tbsp vanilla extract  
2 tbsp white or cider vinegar  
1/4 cup red food coloring

### Making the cake sponges:

1. Grease two 9-inch (23 cm) round metal baking pans
2. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C)
3. In a medium size bowl, mix together the milk and vinegar allowing it to curdle. This will take about 5 minutes.
4. Meanwhile in a large bowl sift together the flour, cocoa powder, baking soda and salt. Stir in the sugar too.
5. Once the milk has curdled, stir in the oil, food color and the extracts. Whisk it well to combine.
6. Make a well in the dry ingredients and slowly add the wet ingredients to it, stirring it until all the ingredients come together.
7. Immediately pour batter into prepared pans. Bake in preheated oven for 25 to 30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Let cool 10 minutes in pan on a wire rack. Run a knife around edge of pans, then invert cakes onto rack to cool completely.

Continued overleaf...

## Creating a topsy-turvy cake:

1. First, for the topsy-turvy cakes, you want them tall, and taper them at the base of each tier so it's wider at the top and smaller at the base. That helps to add to the appearance of instability. For each tier, then, you will need to bake 3 2-inch layers in graduating sizes. The Tea & Talk cake is a 2-tier cake, and the sizes I'm using are 6-7-8, 8-9-10; i.e., the top tier consists of a 6-inch layer, a 7-inch layer, and an 8-inch layer, etc. I think the proportions work well when the largest layer of one tier is the same size as the smallest layer of the tier it sits on. (The 6-7-8 top tier sits on top of the 8-9-10 middle tier).

2. Then assemble with a buttercream filling. Stack the smallest, then the middle, then the largest layers, which makes for some floppy edges to deal with. This way things stay where you want them until it's time to trim and clean up. I don't place the 10-inch layer dead-center onto the 11-inch layer on purpose. The slant that lends helps with the illusion.

3. The 12-inch layer gets cut at an angle. Don't worry about super precision here since imperfect angles just add to the effect. I just hold the knife at the top edge on one side and aim for the opposite corner.

4. When you fill and reassemble this layer, rotate one of the pieces so that the thicker sides are together.

5. All cakes go back in the refrigerator to chill a bit.

6. Use a sharp knife to clean up the sides a bit and get rid of any corners sticking out, then give the whole thing a crumb coat and stick it back into the fridge.

7. Repeat steps 2 – 7 for every tier of your cake.

8. Cut vertically into the cake, all the way around the circle, to create a smooth edge around the cake.

9. OK, big secret number one. The topsy-turvy thing is an optical illusion. Each tier is actually sitting on a flat surface, just like a regular wedding cake. Make an 8" round flat spot. I take a cake cardboard (or pan or, in this case, cheesecake pan insert) and set it on the tier where I want the next tier to sit.

10. Spread buttercream over the now naked surfaces and re-chill; after it's chilled the smooth the cake.

11. With all layers covered with icing, cover with ready roll icing or with buttercream.

12. Prep the board. I use a 12" cake board.

13. When stacking the cake, use cake dowling to keep the upper layers sturdy and insert into the base layer.

14. Decorate in whatever fashion you would like. For the Tea & Talk cake, I made patterns using my creativity which is the product you see here. For this particular cake, I made cupcake shapes and tea cup shapes.

You can always create your own whimsical cake by just doing one tier or why not experiment by making 3, 4 or 5 tiered cakes!