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The Whimsical Bakehouse: Fun-to-Make Cakes That Taste As Good As They Look



Synopsis

Three neon-bright layers of cake, tilted at a jaunty angle and adorned with edible chocolate candles; a Jackson Pollockâinspired cheesecake spattered with chocolate, caramel, and peanut butter icing; and a swarm of plump bees perched atop a rainbow of candy-colored cupcakesâthese are only a few examples of the unfettered creativity at work at the Riviera Bakehouse. There, mother-daughter bakers Kaye and Liv Hansen turn out some of the most charming, refreshingly eccentric cakes ever to grace a birthday or wedding celebration. Kaye and Liv believe that a cake should taste as good as it looks, so they skip esoteric (and inedible) decorations in favor of simple buttercream, flavored whipped cream, and tinted candymakerâs chocolate, covering their luscious cakes with amusing designs and gorgeous color that are easy to make and delicious to eat. The cakes themselves are no less enticing, pairing old-fashioned favorites like Banana Cake and Spice Cake with sumptuous fillings such as French Custard and Chocolate Mousse. Simple step-by-step lessons, illustrated with photographs, explain how to re-create Livâs charming chocolate designs, from the bright polka dots that shine against dark chocolate glaze to the shimmering stars that adorn the enchanting âStarry Night.â • Templates for the delightful designs allow you to adapt these techniques to create your own unique decorations. With time-tested tips and complete information on everything from mixing colors to adjusting pan sizes, the Hansens explain all you need to know to get started. Whether youâre dreaming of an elegant Chocolate Apricot Pecan Torte or a three-tiered butter cake filled with spiked mocha cream and embellished with fantastical spring flowers, *The Whimsical Bakehouse* is the ultimate guide to creating delicious, showstopping confections that are completely original.

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Customer Reviews

This book's ONLY lack is its shortness. I wanted a few hundred more pages of ideas. However, despite its brevity the book is absolutely chock-full of ideas most of which seem obvious in retrospect but I would never have thought of (a deliberately tilted cake?). Its strengths: (1) the recipes are really, really good. Those who remember the old Wilton cake decorating books will understand why I say that this is not always common in books about decorating cakes. (2) the photos illustrate creative use of color and the text contains charts to explain how to reproduce the effects and generate similar ones on one's own, using the different types of food coloring available, the pros and cons of which are clearly explained. (3) the text explains clearly how to use "wafer chocolate," which is really a malleable and dyeable form of white chocolate, for truly stunning effects. (4) children _love_ the cakes. My five-old-daughter grabbed this book, studied it cover-to-cover, and then asked me to read it out loud to her. She will actually sit for fifteen minutes listening intently to a description of how to construct the cakes that she likes. This really is a generous book. The cakes are spectacular enough that the authors probably could have found some way to franchise or trademark their designs and thereby made a lot of money. Perhaps they will make a lot of money selling copies of this book (I hope so) but the information is free if you check the book out of the library. They explain enough of their methods that we all can make cakes in our kitchens that make us laugh out loud. And that is a Good Thing.

Although the photos of cartoon-like full-color images translated into white chocolate that festoon many of the cakes featured in this book intimidated me, I decided to give the technique a try. I found the necessary supplies at my local hobby store, and by following the instructions in the book I produced a white-chocolate replica of my church in about an hour. The techniques featured in this book are fun, absolutely unique, relatively simple to master and even taste good. I can't believe more people don't copy this style. I have several cake books and bought this one to learn the decorating techniques, so discovering it has great cake recipes on top of the decorating instructions made this book a real find for me. Lots of books teach you how to decorate with fondant, gum paste and royal icing--all of which look great but taste like sugary concrete. These decorations aren't just edible; they're delicious. If you are looking to make very special family cakes and willing to invest a little money in decorating supplies to get started, this is the right book for you.

The cake designs in this book use a combination of buttercream icing and chocolate accents. Instead of fondant, the authors use ganache, glaze, or buttercream to paint the canvas of the cake.

Recipes for House Buttercream, Kaye's Buttercream, Chocolate Glaze, and a Whipped Chocolate Ganache are included. To fill the cakes, recipes for Lemon Curd, Whipped Cream, and Cookies and Cream are provided. The cakes themselves run the gamut from a traditional Chocolate Butter Cake to an artistic Ode to Jackson Pollock. The Introduction to this book is a two-way conversation with Kaye and Liv. They discuss the Bakehouse itself (located in New York State), the merits of edible flowers, and Liv's special chocolate decorations. Part One moves into the basics of cake decorating. The authors provide a list of tools, instructions on working with chocolate, a color mixing chart, and step-by-step directions on preparing the cake for decoration (tilted and flat cakes are included here). The Mini Birthday Cake recipe on pages 62 - 65 features a ten-inch tilted cake. These unusual cakes feature prominently in recent cake magazines and publications. One side of the cake is markedly higher than the other, creating a slope across the top surface of the cake. The Mini Birthday Cake is anything, however, but mini! At ten inches, it will comfortably serve 15 guests at your party. The authors introduce this cake as the product of a "Cat in the Hat baker". The cake is adorned with bright purple, orange, yellow, lime green, and teal buttercream icing. The authors recommend using the Chocolate Butter Cake recipe (page 65) for the birthday cake. The recipe calls for coffee, cocoa powder, water, cake flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt, butter, sugar, eggs, and vanilla. The recipe calls for baking the cake in two 10x3" pans by increasing the baking time, it is only necessary to bake one 3" layer. The finished cake is moist and delicate, lending itself well to the suggested cookies and cream filling. The cake is billed as pleasing "screaming kids." I don't know about that, but it sure worked for my husband! The combination of coffee and cocoa gives the cake depth of flavor. After baking and cooling the Chocolate Butter Cake, I prepared the Cookies and Cream filling (page 65). This simple recipe is truly astonishing. The recipe calls for heavy cream, confectioners' sugar, vanilla, and crushed Oreos. The taste was reminiscent of a heavy ice cream, but with the texture of a cloud. It is glorious. Combined with the Chocolate Butter Cake, it is truly a delight. Once the cake had been layered and filled, I prepared the House Buttercream recipe (page 36). This recipe has a surprisingly high ratio of sugar to shortening and butter. For six cups of sugar, the recipe uses 2 1/2 cups high-ratio vegetable shortening in addition to 1 1/2 sticks of butter. This ratio gives the icing an understated flavor, making it an ideal complement to the heady chocolate cake and filling. The icing requires a mixing time of 10 - 20 minutes in a large mixer. Due to the long mixing time, the icing is extremely light in texture, and has a very thin consistency. One full batch of this icing (9 1/2 cups), will ice and decorate the ten-inch mini birthday cake. The completed recipe will fill a five-quart mixing bowl. For hand mixers, you will need to cut the recipe in half. The House Buttercream is ideally suited to the bright colors used in the

Mini Birthday Cake. Very little color gel was needed to achieve a bright, vivid color. However, the high shortening and butter content makes this icing extremely greasy. While the texture is light and airy on the tongue, there is a sheen of shortening left on the palate after eating the icing. Also, the shortening makes for some extra work in cleaning up. Be sure to use a good grease-cutting detergent and hot water when washing out your mixing bowls. Parchment decorating bags may be a wise choice for this icing, cutting down on your cleaning time. The thin consistency of the icing is ideal for icing the cake, handling beautifully in large quantities. However, the Mini Birthday Cake calls for some string work garlands. Thin consistency icing will not fall correctly and has to be traced onto the cake, instead of pulling out a traditional string. This will impact the roundedness of the string work, and has to be compensated for by the decorator.

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