

# Rainbow Swirl Buttercream

Poetry & Pies

**total time:** 20-25 minutes (plus chilling time to deepen the color, if possible)

**yields:** about 3 cups (enough to thickly frost 24 cupcakes)

## Ingredients

- 2 cups (16oz) unsalted European style butter, softened
- 5-8 cups (650-1,040g) powdered sugar
- 4 teaspoons (16g) pure vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon (3g) sea salt
- ½ to 1 teaspoon gel food coloring in desired colors (5-6 colors is ideal)
- 2-4 tablespoons heavy whipping cream (optional--use only as needed)
- optional: [silver](#) or [gold](#) edible stars



## Instructions

1. Add butter to the bowl of your stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment (or a large, deep mixing bowl and using a hand mixer). Beat butter on high for 1-2 minutes, scraping down sides and bottom of bowl with a rubber spatula a couple times.
2. Add powdered sugar one-ish cup at a time, starting mixer on low to avoid a poof of sugar flying everywhere. Slowly increase speed to high, mixing until smooth after each addition (about 30 seconds or so for each cup). Scrape down bowl every 2-3 cups. If it's looking grainy, add a small splash of cream when you scrape the bowl.
3. After adding about 5 cups powdered sugar, add vanilla and salt and mix until fully combined. Taste your frosting and keep adding sugar, this time ½ cup or less at a time, until it reaches your desired taste or thickness. **Remember that the food coloring will thin it out slightly.** Add cream as needed, in small splashes, to smooth out the frosting (but remember that the next step will help smooth it as well). Don't add too much cream, as there's no recovering from that. Be conservative—you can add more later.
4. Once you're happy with the taste/thickness, scrape down the bowl again then beat on high for 3-5 minutes. I sometimes scrape the bowl once in the middle of this if I notice a yellower tinge along the edge of the bowl (see note about achieving a truer white

color). This tinge just means the buttercream on the edge isn't getting pulled in and whipped as quickly as the rest, and it can happen if you're making a smaller batch or if you have a larger stand mixer.

5. At this point, divide buttercream evenly between 5-6 bowls (or however many colors you're doing). Using a small spatula or spoon, stir in about  $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon of each color into each bowl and stir in until well-blended. Continue to mix in dye until you're happy with the color. Don't be scared to add tiny amounts of another color to adjust it to your likings. Below I've included the color combinations I used. Some colors, like yellow, don't need much gel, while others, like red and pink, need a lot more dye to get a rich color.
6. If possible, refrigerate the bowls of frosting (well-covered with plastic wrap) overnight. This will help deepen each color quite a bit. About 2-3 hours before using, remove from fridge and let come to room temperature (keep covered until using so the condensation from defrosting attaches to the plastic wrap). Stir well. You can adjust the color if it's still not to your liking. In fact, I like to make my buttercream 2 days in advance so that I can refrigerate overnight a second time, after adjusting the color once.
7. Once the color is to your liking (and the frosting has defrosted, if necessary), stir well then place in a piping bag.
8. Prepare your "main" piping bag by placing a piping tip in a piping bag (I used [6B](#) but [1M](#) also works well). Opt for a smaller one (10" or 12"), as the rainbow "log" you'll create in the next step is rather thin and it'll be easier to hold with a smaller piping bag around it.
9. To create the rainbow swirls, place a 10" to 12" piece of plastic wrap on your counter. In roughly the middle of the wrap, create a line of your first color of frosting (parallel with the short ends). Make this about 1" thick, leaving about 2" of extra plastic wrap at either end. Continue this process with each of the colors, ensuring that they just barely touch each other and filling in any gaps that are made. Try to make sure they are the same length and thickness.
10. Once all of the colors are laid out, gently but firmly take the long edge of plastic wrap from one side and roll the colors over each other until they're like a cookie dough log. Continue rolling until the plastic is all wrapped around your rainbow log. Twist the ends (that 2" you left at the top and bottom when you created the lines of color). Trim the twisted portion of one end right against the frosting (your scissors may get a little dirty). Place this in your prepared piping bag.

*Note: you will likely need to repeat this process several times to frost all of your cupcakes. I did a tall piping and was able to do 3-4 cupcakes per rainbow "log".*

11. To pipe, be sure to squeeze from the very end of the piping bag. To make a rosette, start in the middle of the cupcake and spiral outward. To create a tall swirl (as seen here), start on the outside and swirl inward then once you've covered the whole cupcake, work your way into an upward swirl for a second layer.

Enjoy!

*If not using that day, place in a sealed container or piping bags (if using the next day) and refrigerate. Frosting will last, tightly sealed, in the fridge 2-3 weeks or in the freezer about 2 months. Let come to room temperature before using. Depending on how long you chilled it, you may need to whip it quickly in your stand mixer or with a hand mixer to fluff it back up.*

Note: I was trying to match a specific color scheme and used the following gel color combinations by Wilton to create my colors.

- Light pink: [Pink](#) with a teeny tiny drop of [Red](#)
- Dark pink: [Rose](#) with a small bit of [Red](#)
- Orange: half [Orange](#) and half [Creamy Peach](#)
- Yellow: [Golden Yellow](#)
- Aqua: [Sky Blue](#)