

Vanilla Bean Buttercream

Poetry & Pies

total time: 5-10 minutes

yields: about 3 cups, enough to fill and frost a two or three layer cake

Ingredients

- 1 ½ cups (12 ounces or 159g) room temperature, unsalted, European style butter*
- 4-6 cups (800-1200g) powdered sugar, to taste (sift before adding if your sugar looks lumpy or you live in a humid climate)
- 1 tablespoon(13g) [vanilla bean paste](#) (weight could vary by brand)
- ¼ to ½ teaspoon (2-3g) fine ground sea salt (to taste)
- 2-4 tablespoons (29-58g) heavy whipping cream (optional--use as needed to smooth frosting)



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 additions. If it's looking grainy, add a small splash of cream when you scrape the bowl.
3. After adding 4 cups powdered sugar, add vanilla bean paste and sea 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. If necessary, add cream as needed, in small splashes, to smooth out the frosting (but remember that step 5 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. If you need a pure white frosting, you can at this point add a teeny tiny, grain-of-quinoa size drop of violet gel food coloring. This, along with the next step, will help it turn close to pure white.
5. 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 (like I do).
6. Once light and fluffy and fully blended, turn off mixer, remove bowl, then scrape down sides and paddle attachment. Using the same rubber spatula or a large wooden mixing spoon, stir vigorously by hand for about a minute, or until you no longer see any air pockets as you stir.

Enjoy!

If not using that day, place in a sealed container or piping bags (if using the next day) and refrigerate. Always place piping bags inside a sealable bag. 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.

**Butter should be matte in appearance and should be soft but have some resistance if you press your finger into it. If it is shiny, put in the fridge for 5-10 minutes to firm it up some. Also, European butter is ideal for buttercream because it has less water and makes a creamier frosting.*