

Cake Central

magazine

VICTORIAN
TAPESTRY
wedding cake tutorial

BUSINESS TIPS
ensure your next cake
consultation is a
piece of cake

FLAVOR
INSPIRATION
from cotton candy
to caramel

CAKES
ACROSS
FLORIDA
cakemakers in
the sunshine state

Tapestry Wedding

INSPIRED BY THE
UNPARALLELED
ARTISTRY OF
WILLIAM
MORRIS



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A writer and editor living in Seattle, Alyssa currently works with several businesses to improve their online presence. Along with contributing to *Cake Central Magazine*, Alyssa runs her website *DearEnglishMajor.com* and is the Managing Editor of *HomeScribeCreative.com*.



< EMILY ELLYN

Cake Genius Emily Ellyn is best known as the Retro Rad Chef from Food Network; she has appeared on "Food Network Star," "Cupcake Wars" and most recently as the winner of "Cutthroat Kitchen." When she's not busy writing or finishing her Ph.D. in Food Service Education, you'll see her with her trademark cat-eye glasses cooking up fun at food and spirits events around the world. You can find her cooking up rad projects at www.emilyellyn.com.

JAY QUALLS >

Jay is one of the premiere bakers in America, specializing in couture wedding cakes at Jay Qualls Cakes. He is also the creator of the Jay Qualls Fondant Fabric. After graduating from Middle Tennessee State University with a business degree, Jay decided to put both his newfound business expertise and his passion for baking and designing to good use and open a high-end wedding cake boutique. With his unique sense of style in cake design, teaching, product development, and business consulting, he is one of the leaders in the cake industry.





DEAR *cake.* genius

Boxed mixes, how to properly store fudge, troubleshooting ovens, and more!
By Emily Ellyn

Dear Cake Genius,

I am baking a three-tiered red velvet cake from a box mix. How can I change the recipe to make the cake more dense so it holds for my event?

From Thinking Outside the Box

Dear Thinking Outside the Box,

The convenience of using boxed cake mixes is irrefutable, and if you catch the sales at your grocery store, it is often cheaper to buy a mix. But, the moist fluffy crumb that attracts home bakers to box cakes does not lend nicely to stacking or covering with fondant. To create the desired texture with a dense crumb, you must turn the mix into a pound cake consistency.

By thinking outside the cake box, this is easy! I am working under the assumption you have found a red velvet cake mix that is at least 18 ounces (some manufacturers have reduced contents to as low as 15 ounces... gasp! It is worth it to have an extra mix on hand to supplement the loss) and yields two 9-inch rounds.

First and foremost, when working with a box mix, always sift the contents of the package (this ensures all the lumps are removed and creates a finer cake texture). Also when making red velvet, substitute the water for warm buttermilk, which helps activate the leavening agents, and bloom the cocoa powder in the mix.

Then, sift in one package of chocolate pudding (3.4 ounce serving size). Finally, increase the amount of eggs in the recipe by one and reduce the amount of oil called for in the mix (use no more than $\frac{1}{4}$ cup). If you want to go the extra mile, add a teaspoon of almond extract.

Piece of cake!

Dear Cake Genius,

I'm a bit new to making fudge and I'm a bit unsure how long fudge can be kept at room temperature and still be safe.

First Fudge Attempts

Dear First Fudge Attempts,

Oh, fudge!

You should never refrigerate fudge. It is perfectly safe stored at room temperature for up to three weeks, and that's what chocolatiers recommend.

Whether you make fudge at home or buy it fresh from a candy store, proper storage keeps this tasty confection tasting fresh longer and prevents it from drying out. If you can control yourself from devouring the fudge immediately, it is best to cut it into manageable sizes (1- to 2-inch squares), wrap in wax paper and cover in plastic wrap and place in an airtight container. This should keep your fudge at a palatable consistency for two to three weeks.

If planning to hold longer, wrap and freeze the fudge. It will keep its integrity for about three months.

May the fudge be with you.

Dear Cake Genius,

I've been baking cakes in my oven with a lower heating element only. I just moved into a new apartment and it has the option of using both upper and lower heating elements. I'm worried my cakes will not bake properly. Please help!

Sincerely,
Playing with Fire

Dear Playing with Fire,

Remember, no two ovens are alike, and rarely will an oven maintain the same temperature over the course of its life. It is helpful to regularly test your oven with a thermometer and calibrate as needed. Also, understanding the role of each of your oven's heating elements is important.

Lower element: Ideal for foods that need extra base temperature without browning, e.g. flatbreads, pizza, and slow-cooked dishes in heavy bottomed bakeware.

Top element (AKA "broiler"): Used to heat from above only. Best used for foods that need to be finished off with golden toppings, but do not require long cooking time, e.g. meringue-topped pies, dishes brushed with eggs and butter, and layered with toppings.

When baking, most ovens actually utilize both elements at once when preheating to bring the oven up to temperature. The broiler element turns off when heated and doesn't turn back on. This is the ideal baking method for breads, cakes and baked puddings or single items baked in the center of the oven. To answer your question, use the bottom element and make sure you allow your oven to completely preheat.

P.S. Be aware that the placement of your oven racks will also affect cooking. Heat rises, and ovens are hotter closer to their heat source. Hence, if you have two baking sheets in your oven, one on a higher rack and one on a lower rack, it is important to rotate your pans. The middle rack is ideal for most foods since it situates the item in the middle of the oven, allowing the hot air to circulate evenly around the food.

Dear Cake Genius,

I have baked about seven cakes so far and they have all come out hard and crusty around the top and bottom; the sides, apart from the edges, are fine. I have tried a few things to solve this problem myself, which are: Turned the oven down to a lower temperature and baked for longer, doubled up the baking paper lining, covered the top of the cake when the top starts to brown. Despite all this, I'm still having this issue.

Yours Truly,
Can't Take the Heat

Dear Can't Take the Heat,

Well there is no need to get out of the kitchen! You are actually on the right track to solving this cake conundrum! One of the most common problems when baking a cake is when the exterior of the cake heats too quickly. The possible explanations include: The oven is too hot, the cake has baked too long, the cake pan is not sufficiently lined or greased and/or the cake pan is too small for the amount of batter.

To keep the exterior of your cake from heating too quickly, try these tips:

1. Monitor your oven's temperature with a thermometer rather than trusting the dial.
2. Utilize a flower (aka rose) nail in the center of the cake. The flower nail will transmit heat to the center of the cake, ensuring it cooks evenly.
3. Do not overfill the cake pan to allow room for cakes to rise.
4. Set the cake pan in a larger baking pan and fill with water (this strategy insulates the cake).
5. Cover the cake with a sheet of aluminum foil halfway through the baking process to prevent the top of the cake from burning.
6. Do not overbake—remove the cake from the oven as soon as a cake tester poked into the center comes out clean.

Patience will pay off, and the only thing burnt on your next cake will be a celebratory candle!