FOOD & CULINARY

Martha Stewart Cream Cheese Pound Cake Recipe

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The Ultimate Guide to the Martha Stewart Cream Cheese Pound Cake Recipe

There are few desserts as timeless, comforting, and universally loved as a classic pound cake. Its dense, tender crumb and rich, buttery flavor make it a staple for everything from afternoon tea to holiday gatherings. Among the countless variations that have graced kitchens over the years, one version stands out for its exceptional texture and flavor: the **Martha Stewart Cream Cheese Pound Cake Recipe**. This particular recipe has earned a devoted following for good reason. By incorporating cream cheese into the traditional butter, sugar, eggs, and flour base, Martha Stewart elevates the humble pound cake into something truly extraordinary—a dessert that is moist, tangy, and impossibly velvety. In this comprehensive guide, we will explore every aspect of this beloved recipe, from its key ingredients and step-by-step instructions to expert tips for ensuring perfect results every time.

Why Cream Cheese Makes the Perfect Pound Cake

To understand why the **Martha Stewart Cream Cheese Pound Cake Recipe**is so revered, it helps to first understand what cream cheese brings to the table—literally. Traditional pound cake recipes rely heavily on butter for flavor and structure. While butter is undeniably delicious, it can sometimes result in a cake that is dense or dry if not handled carefully. Cream cheese, with its higher moisture content and slight acidity, works magic in two ways.

First, it tenderizes the gluten strands in the flour, which prevents the cake from becoming tough. This is why a cream cheese pound cake has that signature melt-in-your-mouth texture. Second, the subtle tanginess of cream cheese cuts through the sweetness, creating a more complex and balanced flavor profile. In Martha Stewart's version, the cream cheese is not an afterthought—it is a star ingredient that works in harmony with high-quality butter and sugar to create a cake that is rich without being heavy. This recipe is a masterclass in how one ingredient can transform a classic.

Key Ingredients for Martha Stewart Cream Cheese Pound Cake

Before you preheat your oven, it is essential to gather the right components. The **Martha Stewart Cream Cheese Pound Cake Recipe**calls for simple, pantry-friendly ingredients, but their quality and temperature matter greatly. Here is a breakdown of what you will need and why each ingredient is important.

Butter and Cream Cheese

The recipe requires unsalted butter and full-fat cream cheese. Using unsalted butter gives you complete control

over the salt level, which is crucial for balancing sweetness. Do not substitute low-fat or whipped cream cheese. The fat content in full-fat cream cheese is necessary for the proper emulsion and texture. Both butter and cream cheese should be at room temperature—soft but not melted. Cold ingredients will not cream together properly, leading to a dense, lumpy batter.

Granulated Sugar

Standard granulated white sugar is the sweetener of choice. The amount may seem generous, but sugar does more than sweeten. It aerates the batter when creamed with the butter and cream cheese, helping to create the cake's fine, even crumb. Do not reduce the sugar drastically or substitute with a liquid sweetener, as this will alter the cake's structure.

Eggs

Eggs provide structure, moisture, and richness. Martha Stewart's recipe typically calls for five or six large eggs, depending on the specific variation. Like the butter and cream cheese, the eggs should be at room temperature. Adding cold eggs to a creamed fat mixture can cause the batter to curdle or separate. If you forget to take your eggs out ahead of time, place them in a bowl of warm water for five minutes.

All-Purpose Flour

Standard all-purpose flour provides the ideal protein content for a tender yet sturdy cake. Some versions of the recipe also call for a small amount of cake flour, which further lightens the texture. Sifting the flour with a pinch of salt and a little baking powder ensures even distribution and helps prevent lumps.

Vanilla Extract

Pure vanilla extract enhances the buttery, tangy notes of the cake. Avoid imitation vanilla, as the flavor difference is noticeable in a recipe with so few ingredients. Some bakers also add a teaspoon of lemon zest or almond extract for a subtle twist, but the classic **Martha Stewart Cream Cheese Pound Cake Recipe** keeps it simple with vanilla.

Step-by-Step Baking Instructions

Now that your ingredients are prepped, it is time to bake. Following these steps carefully will help you achieve the dense yet tender crumb that makes this cake famous.

Prepare Your Pan and Oven

Preheat your oven to 325°F (165°C). Generously butter and flour a standard 10-cup Bundt pan or two 9x5-inch loaf pans. Alternatively, you can use a non-stick baking spray that contains flour. Properly preparing the pan is non-negotiable—cream cheese pound cake has a tendency to stick due to its moist, dense nature.

Cream the Butter, Cream Cheese, and Sugar

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the softened butter and cream cheese on medium speed until light and fluffy, about three to four minutes. Gradually add the sugar and continue beating for another three to five minutes. This step is critical. You want the mixture to be pale in color and visibly increased in volume. Scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl as needed.

Add the Eggs One at a Time

With the mixer on low speed, add the eggs one at a time, allowing each to fully incorporate before adding the next. Over-mixing at this stage can cause the batter to deflate, so be gentle. After all the eggs are added, mix in the vanilla extract.

Fold in the Dry Ingredients

In a separate bowl, whisk together the all-purpose flour, salt, and any leavening agents specified in your version of the recipe. With the mixer on low speed, gradually add the dry ingredients to the wet mixture. Mix only until

the flour disappears—stop as soon as you no longer see streaks of flour. Over-mixing at this stage develops gluten, which will make the cake tough.

Bake to Perfection

Pour the batter into your prepared pan and spread it evenly. Tap the pan gently on the counter to release any air bubbles. Bake for 60 to 75 minutes, depending on your pan size and oven. The cake is done when a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean or with just a few moist crumbs. If the top is browning too quickly, tent the pan loosely with aluminum foil during the last 15 minutes of baking.

Cooling and Removing from the Pan

Allow the cake to cool in the pan on a wire rack for about 15 minutes. This brief rest period allows the structure to set. Then, invert the pan onto the rack and gently lift it off. Let the cake cool completely before slicing. Attempting to slice a warm pound cake will result in a crumbly mess.

Expert Tips for a Flawless Pound Cake

Even experienced bakers can encounter challenges with a cream cheese pound cake. Here are insider tips to ensure your **Martha Stewart Cream Cheese Pound Cake Recipe** turns out perfectly every time.

- Temperature is everything. Room temperature ingredients emulsify smoothly, creating a uniform batter. This is the single most important factor for a crack-free top and even crumb.
- Do not over-cream the sugar. While creaming is essential, beating too long after the sugar is incorporated can cause the butter to break down and the cake to become greasy. Stop when the mixture is light and fluffy.
- Use a kitchen scale. Measuring flour by volume can lead to inconsistencies. For the best results, weigh your flour. One cup of all-purpose flour typically weighs about 125 grams.
- Wrap the pan with a towel strip. Some bakers swear by wrapping the outside of the Bundt pan with a damp cloth strip or using a commercial cake strip. This helps the cake bake more evenly and prevents the dreaded dense ring.
- Allow the cake to age. While it is tempting to eat the cake immediately it has cooled, cream cheese pound cake actually improves after a day. The flavors meld and the texture becomes even more moist. Wrap it tightly in plastic wrap and leave it at room temperature overnight.

Delicious Variations to Try

Once you have mastered the classic **Martha Stewart Cream Cheese Pound Cake Recipe**, you can experiment with simple variations that add new dimensions of flavor.

Lemon Cream Cheese Pound Cake

Add two tablespoons of fresh lemon zest and one tablespoon of fresh lemon juice to the batter along with the vanilla. For extra brightness, drizzle a simple lemon glaze made from powdered sugar and lemon juice over the cooled cake.

Chocolate Swirl Pound Cake

Melt four ounces of semisweet chocolate and let it cool slightly. After pouring the batter into the pan, dollop the melted chocolate on top and swirl it through with a knife. The chocolate ribbons create a stunning marbled effect.

Gluten-Free Adaptation

Substitute the all-purpose flour with a high-quality gluten-free all-purpose blend that contains xanthan gum. Be sure to sift the flour well and do not over-mix, as gluten-free batters can become gummy if agitated too much.

Serving Suggestions

This pound cake is versatile enough to be served in many ways. A simple dusting of powdered sugar is all it needs for an elegant presentation. For a more decadent dessert, serve slices with fresh berries and lightly sweetened whipped cream. The cake also pairs beautifully with a warm fruit compote or a scoop of vanilla ice cream. For breakfast or brunch, toast a slice lightly and spread it with a little salted butter. The tangy, buttery flavor is just as delightful in the morning as it is after dinner.

How to Store and Freeze

Proper storage ensures that your **Martha Stewart Cream Cheese Pound Cake Recipe**stays moist and delicious for days. At room temperature, wrap the cake tightly in plastic wrap or store it in an airtight container. It will remain fresh for up to four days. Do not refrigerate the cake, as the cold temperature can dry it out.

For longer storage, this cake freezes beautifully. Wrap the completely cooled cake in two layers of plastic wrap, followed by a layer of aluminum foil. Freeze for up to three months. To thaw, leave the wrapped cake at room temperature for several hours or overnight. Unwrap it only after it has fully thawed to prevent condensation from making the surface soggy.

Troubleshooting Common Issues

Even with the best recipe, things can sometimes go wrong. Here are solutions to the most frequent problems bakers encounter with cream cheese pound cake.

- The cake has a gummy or dense streak at the bottom. This is usually caused by undermixing or using cold ingredients. Next time, ensure your butter and cream cheese are truly at room temperature and that you mix the batter thoroughly but gently.
- The cake cracked on top. A cracked top is perfectly normal for pound cake and does not affect the taste. It often happens when the oven temperature is too high or the pan is placed too close to the top heating element. To minimize cracking, bake at 325°F and avoid opening the oven door during the first 30 minutes.
- The cake stuck to the pan. This is frustrating but preventable. Use a generous amount of butter and flour, making sure every crevice of the Bundt pan is coated. Alternatively, use a baking spray that contains flour. Allow the cake to cool for exactly 15 minutes before inverting.

Conclusion

The **Martha Stewart Cream Cheese Pound Cake Recipe**is more than just a dessert—it is a testament to the power of simple, high-quality ingredients and careful technique. By adding cream cheese to the traditional formula, this recipe produces a pound cake with an unmatched tenderness, a subtle tang, and a rich, buttery flavor that lingers with every bite. Whether you are baking for a special celebration, a holiday gathering, or simply to enjoy with your afternoon coffee, this cake delivers consistent, impressive results. With the detailed instructions and expert tips provided in this guide, you now have everything you need to create a flawless cream cheese pound cake in your own kitchen. So

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