1961

Basic Recipes

Cooperative Extension, South Dakota State University

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basic recipes

Most recipes are some variation of a basic recipe. In fact, the best informed cooks memorize basic recipes or keep them handy for comparing new recipes. If a new recipe is less rich (probably for a special reason), don’t expect the texture to be as fine or the product quite as tender; if the new recipe is richer, the texture and tenderness should be better; but to handle richer recipes takes careful measurements and more expert handling. Learn to make and to know a good standard product, so you will be able to handle the richer, expensive ones more expertly.

BASIC CAKE
(Conventional method. Made with fat.)

A. Have all ingredients for any cake at room temperature before beginning to mix. This makes them easier to mix and gives better volume to the cake.
B. Prepare pan by greasing the bottom and dusting with flour, or by lining with waxed paper. To cut the paper the right size, trace around the outside of the pan, cut inside the line ¼ inch. The paper should not extend up the side of the pan. Also do not grease the side of the pan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Large Cake Size</th>
<th>Small Cake Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shortening</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>1-½ cups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanilla</td>
<td>1 teaspoon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eggs</td>
<td>2 eggs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>½ teaspoon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cake flour</td>
<td>3 cups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baking powder</td>
<td>4 teaspoons</td>
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<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>1 cup</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. Cream shortening, add vanilla, then add sugar gradually. Cream together until light and fluffy.
2. Add egg, beat well.
3. Measure sifted flour; add baking powder and salt and sift together.
4. Add flour alternately with the milk, beating well after each addition. (Begin and end with addition of flour.)
5. Pour batter into 9x9x2 inch pan bake in 375°F oven from 20 to 25 minutes or two 8 inch layer pans, 1-½ inch deep for 20 minutes or until done.
6. Test for doneness at 20 minutes. Do not over-bake.
7. Let the cake cool in the pan about 5 minutes. Do not leave it too long as this steams the crust.

See tests for doneness of cake at the end of the Mix-Easy Cake recipe.

By Ruth B. Amidon, Extension Nutritionist

The above recipe is for plain basic cake. The proportions for other plain cake recipes using the same ingredients can vary considerably. For example, using 2 cups of flour, the shortening can be as little as ¼ cup and as much as ½ cup, the sugar usually does not go lower than 1 cup, but may go as high as 1½ cup to 1½ cups. Eggs can vary from 1 to 2 or more. Liquid may be ½, ⅔ or 1 cup. The baking powder may be from 2 to 4 teaspoons, the medium amount is safer unless the type baking powder is specified. Double acting baking powder takes 2 teaspoons for 2 cups of flour, phosphate needs 3, and tartrate baking powder 4 teaspoonsful for 2 cups of flour. Read the label on your can to see the type of baking powder you have.

MIX EASY CAKE

This is the "one-bowl" mix easy cake. It is richer than the first cake, but is still within the common variations for a basic cake. You will probably have a better textured cake with this method if you use a hydrogenated vegetable shortening.

Prepare two round 9-inch layer pans, by greasing the bottom and flouring lightly, or by lining with wax paper. Start the oven at 375°F.

2½ cups sifted cake flour
3 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
1½ cups sugar
½ cup shortening
1 cup milk
1 teaspoon vanilla
2 eggs

1. Measure sifted flour into sifter; add baking powder, salt and sugar.
2. Put shortening into bowl, stir just to soften.
3. Sift in the dry ingredients.
4. Add vanilla to ¾ cup of the milk and mix until all the flour is dampened.
5. Beat until batter is smooth, about 2 minutes on the electric mixer or 300 vigorous strokes by hand.
6. Add eggs and remaining milk and beat 1 minute, or 150 strokes by hand.
7. Bake in a moderate oven 375°F. 30 to 35 minutes.

   Note: Butter can be used for the shortening but in that case decrease the milk by 2 tablespoons.

   To test for doneness of cakes: (1) Press lightly with the finger on the top of cake, if done it will spring back and leave no imprint. (2) It should shrink from the sides of the pan and be lightly brown. (3) A tooth pick inserted near the center should come out clean and dry, no doughiness.

   For very rich cakes use tests 1 and 2. They may leave stickiness on toothpick and still be done. Angel food and sponge cakes should not shrink from the sides on the pan, use tests 1 and 3 for them.

BASIC ANGEL FOOD CAKE

1 cup sifted cake flour
1 to 1 ¼ cups finely granulated sugar
1 cup (8 fairly large) egg whites
⅛ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon cream of tartar
1 teaspoon flavoring

1. Sift together four times the flour and half the sugar.
2. Beat egg whites with salt until foamy, then add cream of tartar, and beat until they barely begin to peak, and are still glossy and moist.
3. Add other half of sugar to egg whites in four additions, sprinkling over the while and beating between additions. It is beaten enough when you have a meringue that stands up in soft peaks but is still moist and glossy.
4. Fold the flour mixture in gently and gradually. When the whole is partly blended fold in the flavoring. (The sugar flour mixture can be added in four parts, folding over 15 complete strokes each time, finishing with from 10 to 20 extra strokes.)
5. Pour into ungreased 10-inch tube pan. Cut through the batter midway between the edge of the pan and the tube. Do not lift the spatula from the batter while doing this. This removes any air spaces that might leave a large hole in the cake. Bake in a moderate oven 375°F. about 35 minutes or until done. This makes a more moist, better cake but the oven temperature must be accurate or the top may burn. Many people still use a 325°F. oven for about 45 to 60 minutes or until the cake is done. Test by pressing lightly or with a cake tester or toothpick. Invert and let hang in the pan until cool. If your cake pan has no legs to hold it up from the table, place the center tube over a funnel or the neck of a bottle.

REFRIGERATOR COOKIES

½ cup shortening
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 egg
1 cup brown sugar, pack just ⅛ teaspoon salt firmly enough to hold the ⅛ to ½ cup chopped nuts shape of the cup. if desired
2 cups flour

1. Melt shortening and cool.
2. Beat egg, add sugar gradually beating until sugar is dissolved.
3. Add melted shortening and vanilla and blend thoroughly.
4. Sift and measure flour, add salt and baking powder and sift together.
5. Combine wet and dry ingredients and mix well.
6. Add nuts if desired. Shape into two rolls 2 inches in diameter. Wrap in wax paper. Put into the refrigerator over night or until firm enough to slice easily. Bake in a moderately hot oven 375 degrees, on a lightly greased cookie sheet for about 12 minutes.

   Note: This recipe can be used for rolled cut-out cookies. If too stiff for rolling you may add a tablespoon of milk or cream. They may also be rolled in balls and pressed out with the floured bottom of a glass; or they can be dropped from a spoon.

BROWNIES

½ cup shortening
⅛ cup nuts
2 squares baking chocolate
⅜ cup sifted flour
1 cup sugar
⅛ teaspoon baking powder
2 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla
⅛ teaspoon salt

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease 8x8x2 inch cake pan.
2. Put the chocolate and shortening in a medium sized bowl. Place the bowl over hot water. Have the water touching the bottom of bowl. (Keep the water hot, but not boiling, it would ruin your chocolate.) Stir to blend.
4. Add eggs one at a time and beat about ½ minute, by hand or mixer.
5. Sift together and add flour, baking powder and salt. Beat enough to blend.
6. Pour batter into pan, bake about 25 minutes.

   Note: Be careful not to overbake, then brownies will be moist; overbaking dries them out. They will be slightly moist in the center when tested with a cake tester.
BISCUITS

2 cups flour
1 teaspoon salt
3 teaspoons baking powder

1. Sift flour, measure it, add baking powder and salt and sift together.
2. Cut fat into flour with a pastry blender or two knives until mixture resembles coarse crumbs.
3. Make a well in the center and add milk all at once. Stir the mixture into the milk, stirring from the center, until the dough follows the fork around the bowl.
4. Turn out on a lightly floured board and knead gently for about half a minute, or about 18 strokes.
5. Pat or roll out from 1/2 inch to 3/4 inch thickness. Cut carefully to get as many biscuits as possible from first rolling. (If the dough is patted out into a square, and the biscuits cut in squares they are all cut at once, no re-rolling is necessary.) Bake on ungreased cookie sheet or pan at 450°F., for 12 to 15 minutes.

Note: Because different flour absorbs different proportions of liquid it is difficult to say the ideal amount of liquid, but biscuit dough needs to be as soft as you can handle.

For drop biscuits use the larger amount of liquid and drop from a spoon. They may be left rough or patted out gently. Drop biscuits will have a crisper crust.

The smaller proportion of fat is more often used for biscuits to used as bread; the larger proportion is better for short cake or meat pie topping. For short cake, add a tablespoon or two of sugar also.

BANANA BREAD

2 1/2 cups sifted flour
1/2 cup shortening
1/2 teaspoon soda
2 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
3 medium bananas mashed. (This should make one cup.)

Sift and measure flour; add soda, baking powder and salt and sift together. Cream shortening and sugar; beat in the eggs one at a time. Mix the bananas and milk; add alternately with the flour to the creamed mixture beginning and ending with the flour.

Bake in a 350°F. moderate oven in a 9x5x3 loaf pan from 50 to 60 minutes or until done. Test as for cake.

MUFFINS

2 cups sifted flour
2 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 to 4 tablespoons sugar
2 to 4 tablespoons melted shortening
1 egg
1 cup milk

The larger amounts of sugar and shortening make a more cake like muffin, finer texture and more tender; especially good with blueberries or other fruit added.

1. Sift and measure flour. Add baking powder, salt and sugar and sift again.
2. Beat egg well; add milk to it and mix well. Add melted shortening.
3. Add the liquid to the dry ingredients all at once; stir just enough to moisten all the dry ingredients and give a rough appearance.
4. Fill greased muffin tins 1/2 full.

YEAST BREAD

2 cups liquid (potato water, milk or water) 1 yeast cake or package dry yeast
2 tablespoons sugar 1/4 cup water
2 tablespoons fat Flour, about 6 cups
3 teaspoons salt

Note 1: Using this quantity of liquid and flour, you may vary the sugar from 2 to 6 tablespoons, the fat from 2 to 6 tablespoons.

Note 2: Yeast bread is considered a stiff dough, but the softer you can handle it the better.

1. If milk is used for the liquid, scald it.
2. Pour the hot liquid over the shortening, salt and sugar and 1/4 cup of the flour. Set aside to cool.
3. Dissolve the yeast in the 1/4 cup of luke warm water, as directed on the package.
4. Add the yeast mixture to the first mixture after it has cooled to luke warm.
5. Add 2 cups of flour (or a little more so that you have a batter that you can beat hard). Beat until smooth.
6. Add enough of the remaining flour to make a soft dough. (It is difficult to say exactly how much flour it will take as this depends upon the absorbing ability of your particular flour.)
7. Turn dough onto a lightly floured board and allow to stand 10-15 minutes.
8. Knead until smooth and velvety to touch, and tiny gas bubbles are showing on the surface. Place in a greased bowl to rise, brush the top
with shortening. Cover with damp cloth, or tight lid.

9. Set away from drafts where the temperature is from 80 to 85°F. Let double in bulk about 1½ hours.

10. Punch down. Fold together. Turn over in the bowl. Let rise again until double in bulk, about 45 minutes.

11. Punch down. Turn out onto board. Divide in half, roll into 2 balls, let rest 10 minutes. Shape into two loaves. Place in greased pan about 9x5x3 inches.

12. Cover. Let rise in a warm (80° to 85°F) place until double in bulk, about 1 hour.

13. Bake in a hot oven, 400°F, from 45 to 50 minutes.

14. Tip the loaf out of the pan and tap the bottom or sides of the loaf for a hollow sound. If not done, return it to oven for a few more minutes.

**PASTRY**

2 cups sifted flour ½ to ⅔ cup shortening
1 teaspoon salt 5 to 6 tablespoons water

This quantity makes enough for a 10-inch double crust pie. If lard is the shortening, ½ cup may be enough; for vegetable shortening, use ⅔ cup.

1. Sift flour and salt into bowl.
2. Add shortening. Cut in with a pastry blender or a blending fork, until the pieces are the size of very small peas.
3. Add cold water by the teaspoonsful sprinkling over the flour mixture, tossing lightly with a fork until mixture is barely dampened.
4. Turn out onto a lightly floured pastry cloth, board or wax paper. Press the dough together gently.
5. Chill before rolling. Divide into two parts, roll to ¼ inch thickness.
6. Place carefully on the pan, being careful not to get air bubbles under the crust. Cut the surplus off, crimp the edge, or press down with a fork. Prick the bottom and sides with a fork. Bake at 450°F.
7. See recipe for temperature of a two crust pie. It is usually 450°F. for 10 minutes, then 350°F. until done.

**Tips for good pastry:** Handle as little and as lightly as possible. Be very sparing with the water. Use a pastry cloth (medium weight cotton “duck” or canvas) and stockinette on your rolling pin, or roll between two pieces of waxed paper. Always roll lightly from the center to the outer edges. A dark pie pan or glass one browns the bottom crust better. Also, the bottom crust bakes better if the pan is on a grate just below the center of the oven.

**CUSTARD**

(Same proportions are used for either baked or soft custard.)

- 2 cups milk
- ⅛ teaspoon salt
- 4 tablespoons sugar
- ½ teaspoon vanilla
- 2 eggs
- sprinkle of nutmeg or cinnamon

**Baked Custard**

1. Heat oven to 325°F. Scald milk by heating in a saucepan until a rim of little bubbles forms around the edge.
2. Place eggs in a bowl and beat them with a fork until they are well blended.
3. Add sugar and salt and beat until blended. Add vanilla.
4. Pour into a baking dish or into individual molds. Sprinkle with cinnamon or nutmeg as desired.
5. Set the dish or molds into a pan filled with one inch of hot water.
6. Bake in a slow oven until firm, about 40 minutes.

To test, insert a silver knife in the custard. If the knife comes out clean the custard is done.

**Soft Custard or Custard Sauce.** Scald milk. Beat eggs with a fork until well blended; add salt and sugar. Pour milk gradually over egg mixture, stirring constantly. Cook over hot, not boiling water, stirring constantly until thickened. Cool by setting in cold water, flavor when slightly cooled.

**NOTE:** If you accidentally let the mixture get too hot and it curdles, set the pan quickly in cold water and beat with an egg beater.

**WHITE SAUCE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thin</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Thick</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 tablespoon fat</td>
<td>1 to 2 tablespoons fat</td>
<td>1½ to 3 tablespoons fat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 tablespoon flour</td>
<td>2 tablespoons flour</td>
<td>3 tablespoons flour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 cup milk</td>
<td>1 cup milk</td>
<td>1 cup milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¼ teaspoon salt</td>
<td>¼ teaspoon salt</td>
<td>¼ teaspoon salt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pepper if desired</td>
<td>Pepper</td>
<td>Pepper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Melt the shortening in a saucepan; add flour and seasonings; stir until blended. Add milk and cook, stirring briskly all the time until thickened. Keep the heat under the sauce pan very low, or use a double boiler.