

Decorations

Decorations are where pastry chefs can express all their imagination and artistic flair to make their cakes, pastries and desserts appealing to the eye as well as the palate.

ICINGS AND FROSTINGS



Buttercream is a light, smooth mixture of fat and sugar, with sometimes the addition of eggs or Italian meringue. Unsalted butter is the best fat to use because of its taste. Buttercream can be flavoured easily with things like coffee, chocolate or liqueur, and coloured to make bright toppings or fillings for cupcakes.

Flat or water icing is made with icing sugar and water. It is mostly used for coffee cakes, Danish pastries and sweet rolls.



Royal icing is made with egg whites and icing sugar which sets hard when it is dry. It is used for delicate, decorative work with a piping bag and nozzles, for example on wedding cakes. White is traditional, although it can be coloured.

Rolled fondant is made with icing sugar, glucose, gelatine and water. Available in many colours, it can be rolled out into thin sheets to cover cakes or cut and modelled into different shapes, such as flowers.



CHOCOLATE



Piped decorations – Tempered chocolate can be piped using a paper piping bag directly onto a finished cake or onto parchment paper in small designs (free hand or on a template) and left to harden. Popular designs are hearts, flowers, spirals and lattices.



Curls and shavings – These are made by spreading a thin layer of chocolate on a marble surface and then using a knife to push the chocolate into curls. Shavings can also be made using a melon baller.



Cutouts – To make chocolate cutouts of different sizes and shapes, spread a thin layer of tempered chocolate onto an acetate sheet with a palette knife. When it is firm but not hard, you can cut the desired shapes with a small, sharp knife or cutters. 'Marbling', 'splatters' and 'ribbon' effects can be obtained by using a mix of dark, milk and white chocolate.

Spray – Chocolate, thinned with melted cocoa butter, can be sprayed using a paint sprayer to create a velvet-like coating.



SUGAR



Sugar cages – These are delicate sugar ‘domes’ which can cover a whole cake or an individual portion. Drizzle caramelised sugar syrup from a spoon in a ‘lace-like’ pattern over a ladle or mould depending on the size you want the cage to be.



Dessert presentation



Spun sugar – This is a mass of very thin strands of sugar used to decorate cakes like St Honoré. Using a fork or a wire whisk with the ends cut off, ‘flick’ sugar syrup over a rolling pin to create the thin hair-like strands. It can be shaped as needed, for example into nests, and should be made just before it is needed otherwise it absorbs moisture from the air and becomes sticky.

Pulled and ‘blown’ sugar – A difficult technique which requires a lot of practice. Coloured sugar syrup is pulled and folded as it gradually cools. Working under a sugar lamp, pieces can be shaped by hand into leaves and flowers or blown into hollow spheres and other shapes using a sugar pump.



Read the texts on pages 228-229 quickly and underline all the utensils and equipment. What are the names of the utensils and equipment in the photos?



1 _____



2 _____



3 _____



4 _____

INVALSI

Read the texts again and match the two parts of the sentences.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 Buttercream and rolled fondant can... | a be made in advance. |
| 2 Royal icing is used for... | b is thinned with cocoa butter. |
| 3 Chocolate decorations are... | c complicated to learn how to do well. |
| 4 Chocolate used in a paint sprayer... | d be coloured for different effects. |
| 5 Spun sugar should not... | e piped on the dessert or on parchment paper. |
| 6 Pulled and blown sugar are... | f piping delicate patterns. |

Complete these instructions with the verbs in the box.

drizzle – pipe – shape – spread – thin

- 1 _____ the chocolate into a thin layer using a palette knife.
- 2 Carefully _____ the melted chocolate into spirals.
- 3 _____ the flat icing over the tops of the sweet rolls.
- 4 _____ the buttercream with a little milk if it is too stiff.
- 5 _____ the spun sugar into a small nest to top each profiterole.