

OMBRE GENDER REVEAL CAKE

I came up with this recipe in order to surprise the kids with the news that we would be welcoming a baby boy to the family. It's a delicate sophisticated cake made with champagne and buttermilk, but it's topped with a festive and fun crème fraîche/ buttercream frosting that heavily speckled with blue and pink "rainbow" chips. It was wonderful for me to get to be by myself for a bit after getting the news, and to bake this cake for my family.

A quick note on the food coloring. The amount of coloring that you use will depend on a number of factors: the brand, the type (liquid vs. gel), and the depth of color you'd like. Gel coloring goes a long way and is much richer, but requires some forethought to get a hold of. I used Wilton brand blue and magenta coloring for this cake - which I found at Safeway, but there are loads of different brands, higher quality kinds, and hundreds of great colors available online.

Cake Ingredients.

pink (or magenta) food coloring or coloring gel OR blue food coloring or coloring gel
1 1/2 cups (3 sticks) unsalted butter, at room temperature (plus more for greasing the cake pans)
2 1/2 cups granulated sugar
3 large eggs, at room temperature
2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
1 3/4 cups cake flour
1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 1/2 teaspoon fine sea salt
1 cup Champagne or sparkling wine
1 cup buttermilk
4 oz pink OR blue chips
canola or vegetable oil spray

Frosting Ingredients.

1 cup crème fraîche (or you could substitute with 8oz of room temperature cream cheese), at room temperature
1 1/2 cups (3 sticks) unsalted butter, at room temperature
7 cups powdered sugar
2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
4 oz pink chips
4 oz blue chips

Pink and Blue Chips Ingredients.

12 oz white chocolate chips
pink (or magenta) food coloring or coloring gel
blue food coloring or coloring gel

Pink and Blue Chip Directions.

Lay out a large sheet of parchment paper.

Split the white chocolate chips into two glass microwave safe bowls. One bowl will have 8 oz of chips, the other will have 4 oz. You'll color the 8 oz pink if you're having a girl, blue if it's a boy - and the 4 oz will be colored for the gender you're NOT having. You'll need to work quickly once the chocolate is melted because it will start to set right away.

Start with the bowl filled with the 8 oz of white chocolate chips. Microwave in 5-10 second spurts, stirring the chocolate after each spurt in the microwave until it's just melted - being careful not to overheat it. Quickly stir in the desired amount of food coloring (matching the gender of your baby) until thoroughly combined, and spread out the melted, colored chocolate into a thin layer on the parchment paper and allow it to cool.

Next melt the 4 oz of white chocolate chips following the same method, but this batch will be the opposite color (the color matching the gender that you're NOT having). Spread out the melted, colored chocolate into a thin layer on the parchment paper and allow it to cool.

Once the chocolate has cooled and set, chop it up into small chip-size pieces, keeping the colors separated. Set aside 4 oz from the 8 oz batch, these will be folded into the cake batter. Combine the remaining 4oz of pink and 4 oz of blue, tossing to mix. Set aside.

Cake Directions.

Prepare two 9" round cake pans by greasing them with butter and lining the bottoms with parchment paper. Lightly flour the sides of the pans after the parchment is pressed into place. Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Sift together the flour, cake flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt into a bowl. Set aside.

In a stand mixer with the paddle attachment cream together the sugar and the butter until the mixture is pale in color, and fluffy in texture.

With the mixer running on low, add the eggs, one a time, allowing each to fully mix in before adding the next. Scrape down the sides if needed.

Add the vanilla.

Add 1 cup of the dry ingredients, allow to combine.

Add the buttermilk, allow to combine.

Add another cup of the dry ingredients, allow to combine.

Add the Champagne, allow to combine.

Finally, add the remainder of the dry ingredients, allow to combine, being careful not to over-mix.

Use a kitchen scale (or measuring cup) measure out four equal parts of the batter, dividing the batter into four bowls. Color each bowl in increasing shades of blue, starting with the palest one and working your way up in saturation.

Pour two of the batters into the two prepared cake pans. Smooth the batter evenly in the pan. Place the pans in the oven on the middle rack and bake, rotating them 180° once halfway through baking, for 20-25 minutes. They're done when the center is set, and a skewer inserted into the center comes out clean except for a couple crumbs.

Transfer the cake pans to cooling racks and allow to cool for 10-15 minutes. Line two cooling racks with parchment paper, and lightly spray the paper with canola or vegetable oil, before carefully inverting the cakes onto the cooling racks. I place the greased parchment and cooling rack on top of the cake pan before flipping the whole lot over to release the cake from the pan.

Re-grease and line the pans before filling with the remaining two batters, baking, and cooling the final cake layers as directed above.

Allow the cakes to cool completely before assembling your cake. While the cakes are cooling, prepare your frosting.

Frosting Directions.

In a stand mixer combine the butter and crème fraîche, churning them together to combine as much as possible, slowly increasing the speed to avoid splattering. The nature of the crème fraîche won't allow them to thoroughly combine, but once the powdered sugar is added it will come together. Turn the mixer off, add in all of the powdered sugar, and slowly increase the speed until the frosting is a light, pale white, and is fluffy and airy. Reduce the speed to low, add the vanilla, and the combined pink and blue chips. Mix until thoroughly combined.

Assembling Directions.

Line your platter with four sections of parchment leaving a space in the middle for the cake to go. Place a small dollop of frosting in the center of the platter to hold the cake in place. Place the first (lightest) layer of cake down in the center of the platter. Using an offset spatula, place about half a cup of the frosting in the center of the cake, slowly spreading outward towards the edges. Remove excess frosting, ensuring that it's level, before adding the second (slightly darker) layer of cake.

Repeat the frosting and layering method until you get to the top (darkest) layer. Place this final layer on upside down so you have a nice, flat surface on the top of your cake. Place lots of frosting on top of the cake, spreading out with the offset spatula and over the edges, down the sides, to completely frost the cake. Take a moment to ensure that

every bit is covered so as not to spoil the surprise color inside! Carefully remove the four sections of parchment from the platter.

Enjoy the cake with loved ones!

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