

PINK VELVET CAKE

(slightly modified from *I'll Bring the Cake*)

¾ cup buttermilk

⅔ cup sour cream

⅓ cup vegetable oil

4 egg whites

1 tablespoons raspberry emulsion

1 tablespoon vanilla extract

2 tablespoons freeze-dried raspberries, powdered in a food processor

1 box white cake mix

pink gel food dye, a couple of small drops

for the vanilla buttercream:

3 sticks (1½ cups) unsalted butter

Pinch of salt

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

¼ cup heavy cream (plus more if needed)

7 to 8 cups powdered sugar

Heat the oven to 325°F. Prepare three 6-inch round cake pans covering the bottom with parchment and spraying baking spray on the sides and bottom. Reserve.

In a large bowl, whisk together the buttermilk, sour cream, oil, egg whites, raspberry emulsion, vanilla and freeze-dried raspberries until thoroughly combined. Sift in the cake mix and pink food dye, whisk until just combined. Split the batter evenly among the prepared pans.

Bake for 25 to 27 minutes, until the center is baked through. Let the cakes cool in the pan for about a minute before flipping them out onto a wire rack to cool completely. Wrap and transfer the cakes to the freezer for 30 minutes before proceeding with frosting. You can also save them in the fridge to continue the following day.

Make the buttercream: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat the butter on medium speed until it's light and fluffy. Add the salt, vanilla, and heavy cream and beat again until thoroughly combined. Scrape down the sides of the bowl. With the mixer on low speed, add the powdered sugar about ½ cup at a time. Add a little more heavy cream if needed, then flip the mixer to high speed and beat until the buttercream is lighter in color and texture, about 2 minutes. Separate one cup of frosting to dye pink, leave the rest plain.

Assemble the cake: Place a cardboard cake round on a cake turntable. Dot a little bit of buttercream in the center of the round and spread it out with an angled icing spatula. Place the first chilled cake layer in the center. Add a layer of buttercream. Place the next cake layer on top, then repeat, making sure to line the layers up evenly. After adding the top cake layer, crumb coat the cake by spreading a thin layer of buttercream around the entire cake. Freeze the cake for 5 minutes.

To the reserved buttercream, add 1 drop of soft-pink gel coloring and stir to incorporate. Pipe hearts and little blobs, using a round tip for the hearts, and an open star to the little blobs. Cover the top with sprinkles and add a decorative border with a 1M piping tip.