

Cake Pops

Makes about 20 cake pops

For the cake:

1 stick (1/2 cup) unsalted butter, softened
1 ½ cups granulated sugar
3 large eggs
2 ¼ cups all purpose flour, more for the pan
3 ½ teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
1 ¼ cups whole milk
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
Equipment: wax paper, baking sheet, 13 x 9 inch baking pan

For the cream cheese frosting:

4 ounces cream cheese, at room temperature
4 tablespoons unsalted butter softened
8 ounces confectioners sugar
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
Optional: food coloring

For chocolate coating:

16 ounces white or dark chocolate bark
20 cake pop sticks
Optional: sprinkles or other decorations

Place a rack in the middle of the oven and preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
Grease the 13 x 9-inch baking pan with butter and dust with flour. Set aside.

Place the softened butter and sugar in the bowl of an electric mixer. Beat with the paddle mixer on medium-high speed until the butter and sugar are light and fluffy. Add the eggs one at a time beating after each addition.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder and salt. Add the flour mixture in three additions; add the milk after the 1st and 2nd addition of the flour mixture. Add the vanilla extract and beat until combined. Pour the batter into the prepared baking pan and smooth the top with a rubber spatula.

Bake the cake for 25 to 30 minutes until a skewer inserted in the thickest part of the cake comes out clean. Remove from the oven and let cool on a wire rack.

Note: You will only need half of the sheet cake (about 4 cups) for this recipe of cake pops. You can double the frosting and chocolate-coating portions of this

recipe or simply freeze the remaining cake in an airtight bag or container for use at a later date.

While the cake is cooling, prepare the cream cheese frosting by beating the cream cheese and butter in the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with a whisk attachment until smooth. Slowly add in the confectioners sugar beating until combined. Beat in the vanilla extract and food coloring if using.

Line a small baking sheet with wax paper. Place four cups of crumbled cake in a large bowl and add about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of cream cheese frosting. Mash together the cake and frosting to the consistency of play dough – you may need to add more cream cheese frosting to reach the right consistency. Shape the dough into approximately 20 golf-ball size balls and place the balls on the wax paper-lined baking sheet. Once all the balls have been formed, place them in the refrigerator to chill for at least one hour.

When the cake balls have properly chilled, place the chocolate bark in a microwave-safe bowl and microwave for 30 seconds. Stir the chocolate and then return it to the microwave for another 30 seconds. Continue microwaving in 30-second increments, stirring after each addition, until the chocolate is completely melted.

Remove the chilled cake balls from the refrigerator and put a stick in each ball. Dip the chilled cake balls into the melted chocolate to coat and return to the lined baking sheet. Decorate with sprinkles while the chocolate coating is still soft; it hardens quickly. Allow the chocolate-coating to harden before storing or serving. Cake pops can be frozen for up to 3 months.