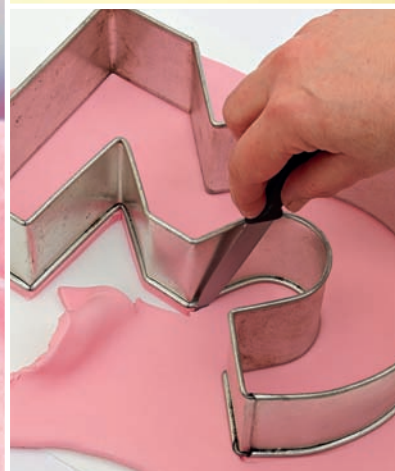




2 Fondant

Fondant, sometimes called sugarpaste, is a thick, sweet dough, which can be used in a similar way to edible modelling clay. It is an extremely versatile type of icing, and may also be called ready-to-roll icing, plastic icing and rolled fondant. Fondant can be used both to cover cakes and to make models and shapes, and it is extremely easy to use, which makes it suitable for anyone to work with, including children and beginners.



Fondant varieties

Throughout this book, ‘fondant’ refers to the sweet, dough-like, edible modelling icing, sometimes called sugarpaste or rolled fondant. However, you may also come across ‘poured fondant’ which is a liquid substance great for covering cakes, but not suitable for modelling.

► Covering up

Following a few simple rules will give your cakes a perfect covering.



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Make your own fondant

If you prefer to make your ingredients from scratch, you can make your own fondant – but be warned, it is a messy procedure. These recipes should produce enough fondant to cover an 20 cm (8 in) round cake. Making any more than this in one session will require an enormous industrial mixer with a dough hook! Therefore it is easier to mix up small quantities and knead them together when ready.

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Buying fondant

Thanks to the increase in popularity of cake decorating over the past few years, ready-made fondant is widely available from cake-decorating shops, online stores and larger supermarkets. All will perform in a similar way, but there may be a slight difference in taste between brands. The advantages of using shop-bought fondant are the time it saves and its consistency, which will always be the same.

Fondant recipe

This recipe is simple to put together. Liquid glucose is available from cake shops and larger supermarkets.

Ingredients

500 g (1lb 2 oz) icing sugar
1 egg white or equivalent dried egg white
(meringue powder) reconstituted
30 ml (2 tbsp) liquid glucose (corn syrup)

1 Sieve the icing sugar into a large bowl and make a well in the centre.

2 Pour the egg white and glucose into the well and stir it in. Use your hands or the bread-kneading attachment on your mixer to knead the fondant together. Knead until it becomes silky and smooth.

3 Double wrap the fondant in two plastic food bags to prevent it from drying out. It can be used immediately. It does not have to be refrigerated, but should be used within a week.

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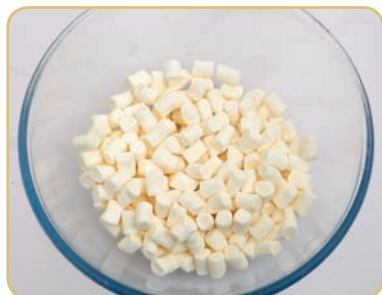
Marshmallow fondant

If you have a dough-hook attachment on your mixer it will make kneading this paste much easier. However, it is still possible to make by hand, but it will take a lot of kneading. Buy more marshmallows than the recipe requires if you have children—they may nab them!

Marshmallow fondant should be fine to use in temperatures up to 75°F (24°C). Always keep cakes out of direct sunlight, boxed up if possible, and in a cool cupboard.

Ingredients

225 g (8 oz) white mini marshmallows
15–45 ml (1–3 tbsp) cold water
450 g (1 lb) icing sugar (sieved)
60 g (2 oz) solid vegetable shortening in a shallow bowl



1 Place the marshmallows in a large heatproof bowl along with 15 ml (1 tbsp) of water. Microwave for 30 seconds. Stir and microwave for another 30 seconds. Continue in 30-second segments until the marshmallows have dissolved. It should take 1–2 minutes.



2 Tip three-quarters of the sugar on top of the marshmallow mixture and fold it in using a spatula or long metal spoon.



3 Grab a large handful of the vegetable shortening and grease both your hands and your worktop. Tip the mixture out and knead it as you would bread, by pulling and pushing the dough, continually folding it over. Add the rest of the sugar as you go and keep regreasing your hands. By the end you should have used up all the fat and sugar. It could take up to 10 minutes of kneading and it will be messy!



4 When you have created a large dough-like lump of silky fondant—which should stretch if you pull a section off—double wrap it in plastic wrap or a resealable food bag. The fondant will be very soft at first and is at its best if allowed to sit and mature for a few hours before use, ideally overnight.

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Using poured fondant

Poured fondant will give you a lovely smooth finish on your cupcakes.



Heat the poured fondant in a glass measuring cup according to the package instructions. Slowly pour the fondant onto your cupcake until it almost reaches the top of the case. Tap the cupcake on the work surface to remove any air bubbles, then quickly add any decorations, because this fondant sets almost instantly!



FIX IT

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CRACKING UP?

If the dough gets dry, add a little vegetable shortening or a little water—about 75 ml (½ tbsp) at a time. If it gets too wet, add sugar. You can add a little vegetable shortening to shop-bought fondant if necessary, but use sparingly.

Colouring fondant

Although you can buy coloured fondant, it is very easy to colour your own. The advantage of this is that you can achieve whatever shade or depth of colour you want, rather than being limited by what your local cake-decorating shop may have in stock.



◀ In the mix

You can achieve a wide variety of colours by mixing coloured fondant using the principles you'd use for paint.

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Mixing quantities

Make sure you colour enough fondant for your project, because it is difficult to match the colour when you run out and have to make more.

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What type of food colouring?

When colouring fondant, it is best to use food colour pastes or gels rather than liquids. Pastes and gels are thicker than liquid colours and extremely concentrated, so you shouldn't need to use as much and they are less likely to alter the consistency of the fondant. If you only have liquid colours, then keep their use to a minimum – and if the fondant does start to get too wet, knead some extra icing sugar back in.

Another option is to knead lumps of different-coloured fondant together – black and white to make gray or yellow and red to make orange.

Some deep colours, such as red and black, can use a lot of colour and take a lot of effort to achieve, so it might be worth buying these shades ready coloured.

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How to get flat, matt colour

Follow this step-by-step demonstration to discover the essential techniques for colouring fondant. Apply the steps using your chosen colour.



1 Lightly dust your work surface with icing sugar to help prevent the fondant from sticking. Knead the fondant until it is warm and pliable.



2 Apply dabs of food colour paste to the kneaded fondant. To prevent your pot of food colour from becoming contaminated, use a fresh toothpick, then throw it away afterwards.



3 Begin to knead the colour into the fondant. If you are worried about staining, wear disposable food gloves.



4 The fondant will look streaky at first. Continue kneading until it is entirely mixed and you have a flat, matt colour.



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Mixing skin tones

It is possible to buy ready-coloured fondant in various skin tones. These should be easily available either in your nearest cake-decorating equipment shop or via an online store.

Alternatively, you can colour your own fondant using food colour pastes or gels. There are various shades of food colour paste that you can buy to achieve different skin tones. Paprika

or chestnut are two of the most commonly used colours to make a pinkish skin tone. You will only need a tiny dash of colour. For darker shades, use dark brown or more chestnut food colour paste.

You can also make flesh tones by kneading together different-coloured lumps of fondant.



▲ Light pink

Use white fondant and add a tiny dash of 'paprika' or 'chestnut' food colour paste and knead in. Alternatively, knead some white, pink and yellow fondant together in a ratio of $\frac{1}{2}$ white, $\frac{1}{4}$ yellow and $\frac{1}{4}$ pink.



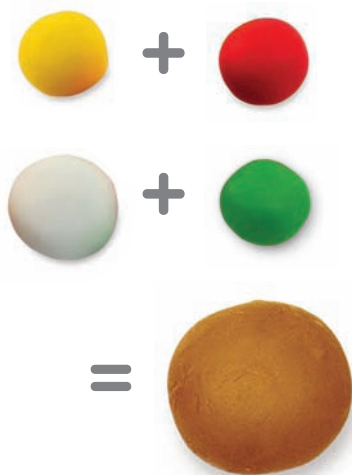
▲ Dark pink

Add slightly more 'paprika' or 'chestnut' food colour paste to a lump of white and knead in. Alternatively, knead some white, pink and yellow fondant together in a ratio of $\frac{1}{2}$ white, $\frac{1}{4}$ yellow and $\frac{1}{4}$ pink. Then add a little red.



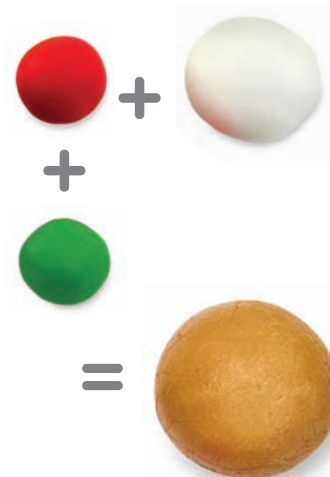
▼ Dark brown

Knead dark brown food colour paste into some white fondant. Alternatively, knead some red, green and black fondant together in a ratio of $\frac{2}{5}$ red, $\frac{2}{5}$ green and $\frac{1}{5}$ black.



▲ Golden brown

Use white fondant and a dash of food colour in a shade called 'autumn leaf'. Alternatively, knead white, yellow, red and green fondant together in a ratio of $\frac{2}{5}$ white, $\frac{1}{5}$ yellow, $\frac{1}{5}$ red and $\frac{1}{5}$ green.



▲ Light brown

Use white fondant and knead in a little 'chestnut' food colour paste. Alternatively, knead some white, red, and green fondant together in a ratio of $\frac{3}{5}$ white, $\frac{1}{5}$ red and $\frac{1}{5}$ green.

FIX IT

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CHANGING THE SHADE

You can always lighten a shade by kneading more white fondant back in or darken a shade by adding more colour.



For tips on figures see pages 76–83.

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Create a woodgrain effect

This is a useful technique to know about if you ever need to make fondant floorboards—to place around a bed-shaped cake or a chair cake, for example.



- 1 Roll some white fondant into a thick, chunky sausage shape and apply some streaks of food colour paste with a toothpick. You can use just one shade of brown food colouring or a mixture (dark brown and chestnut, for example).
- 2 Fold the fondant sausage over onto itself and reroll into a sausage shape.
- 3 Keep rolling, folding and rerolling the sausage until you can see the woodgrain effect appearing.
- 4 Roll the fondant out and apply it to your cake or board.

TRY IT

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MARBLING

Combine a sausage of white fondant with some streaks of food colour paste and knead together, but stop when the fondant is at the streaky stage and roll it out. The fondant will have taken on a marbled appearance. This is a useful technique for making a watery effect or for covering a cake that is supposed to look as though it has been made out of marble.



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Fondant floorboards

Fondant floorboards are both effective and simple to make. If you want to add a rug, cut out a fondant rectangle, cut a fringe along two opposite ends and place it on your fondant floor.



- 1 Using a pastry brush, lightly moisten the surface of the cake board with a little water.



- 2 Begin to roll out the fondant on your work surface, then place it on the board. Continue to roll the fondant up to and over the edges of the board. Trim away any excess fondant.



- 3 Using a ruler, press lines into the fondant to form the 'boards'.



- 4 Using the back of a small knife, press a few lines across a few of the boards to give the impression of shorter boards.



- 5 Using a drinking straw, press two circles on either side of the shorter board lines. These will look like nail heads in the boards. Place your decorated cake on top.

Spots, stripes, and other delights

If your cake design requires a large area of pattern, you can craft coloured effects and patterns on fondant using more fondant. This type of effect is useful if you're creating a cake in the shape of a wrapped parcel, or if you just want an abstract covering for a birthday cake.

Spots

- 1 Make 10–15 small 5 g (1/4 oz) fondant balls in the colours of your choice and place to one side. Depending upon the size of cake you're covering, you may need fewer or more balls. Lay a sheet of plastic food wrap over them to stop them from drying out.
- 2 Begin to roll out the fondant that you plan to use to cover your cake, but stop before it gets too thin.
- 3 Place the small fondant balls on the sheet of fondant and stick them down with light dabs of water.
- 4 Continue to roll over the sheet of fondant. This will flatten the balls into the icing and create a pattern.
- 5 Lay the fondant sheet over your cake, smooth it into place, trim, then neaten the edges.

Stripes

To make a striped effect, follow the same procedure as for the spots, except this time lay long, thin strings of fondant across the fondant base.

Flowers

Follow the spots and stripes process but this time, using a five-petal flower cutter, cut out some thick fondant flower shapes and lightly stick them onto the base fondant. Cut out discs for the flower centres and place one in the middle of each flower. Roll over the whole sheet to flatten it, then place it over your cake.



Parcel cake

This cake is a useful design to have in your repertoire, since it can be used for all sorts of occasions. For example, fondant holly and berries would make a striking parcel design for Christmas.

- 1 Spread some buttercream around the top and sides of a square or rectangular cake. Cover the cake using your patterned fondant.
- 2 Using the back of a knife, press a 'V' shape into two opposite ends of the parcel to represent the folds.
- 3 Lay two strips of fondant ribbon across the cake and hold in place with either small dabs of buttercream or a little tacky fondant – dip a small fondant ball in water and work it in your fingers until it's sticky. Finish off with a decorative fondant bow (see page 67).

Storing and transporting fondant

Fondant is a fairly hardy and substantial type of cake covering and can last in its airtight package for a long while. Once the package is opened and your cake is decorated, it is easy to store as long as you observe a few simple rules.

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Storing fondant

Shop-bought fondant will arrive sealed in airtight packaging. It will have a 'best before' date.

Once the package is open, the fondant has a limited lifespan in which it can be used before it starts to dry out and harden as it comes into contact with air. Once you open the package, it is important that any unused fondant is rewrapped tightly in a small, resealable food bag. Plastic wrap can be used in an emergency, but it will not keep the fondant soft for as long as food bags do. Place the bags into a large, airtight plastic container and store in a cool, dark cupboard.

Homemade fondant should be treated in exactly the same way. Neither homemade nor shop-bought fondant should be kept in the fridge.

Avoid fading colours

Fondant will fade in bright light – particularly sunlight and even fluorescent light. To prevent this from happening, place any fondant that is being stored in an airtight plastic container and then in a cupboard.

Keep finished cakes or fondant models in a cardboard cake box with a lid. This will not only protect your work from light damage, it will also protect it from dust and insects.



► Pretty presentation

There is a whole host of wonderful ways to present friends and family with your cupcake creations.

Storing models

If you are making 50 fondant teddy bears to put on top of cupcakes for a children's party, you may well need to think about making them in advance, a few at a time. This is completely possible. As mentioned above, keep them in a cardboard cake box until required. Do not place finished fondant models in an airtight plastic container or tin, because they will begin to sweat and start to droop.

Refrigeration

Whether it's an unopened package of fondant, a decorated fondant cake or a simple fondant model, fondant should never be kept in the fridge because the dampness inside the fridge will cause the fondant to become too moist.

Freezing

You cannot freeze fondant models or fondant-covered cakes. If you want to get ahead by freezing a cake, you can bake, cool, slice and fill a cake with buttercream and freeze it at this stage, tightly wrapped in plastic wrap. When you need it, let it defrost overnight and then coat the outside with buttercream and cover with your fondant.

◀ Boxed up

A cake box is ideal for storing and transporting models. If you can't get hold of a cake box, you could use a cardboard box and cover it with wrapping paper. Cover up a cellophane window if storing for a long time to avoid light damage.



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Transporting fondant

The best method by far for both storing and transporting a fondant-covered cake is to use a cardboard cake box. Purpose-built boxes are available in many sizes, all designed to fit and hold a cake snugly in place on a board. They usually comprise two parts, a base and a lid, and are available in either thin or thick cardboard, the latter being for a cake that has to travel long distances. Boxes are readily available online or from any cake-decorating shop.

Transporting tall cakes

If you are transporting a cake that is taller than the height of the box, you will have to extend the height of its sides. Measure the height of the cake and add about 2.5 cm (1 in) to that measurement. Use a sheet of cardstock or a cereal box and cut out four sections that you can staple or tape to the sides of the box to extend its height to the required measurement. Assemble the now taller box and put the lid on top.

FIX IT

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ADAPT THE CAKE BOX

If the box is too big for your cake or the cake has decorations that overhang the edges of the cake board, you will need to use a nonslip mat to hold the cake in place. This is available at cake craft stores or on the Internet, and is a thin rubber mat that you can cut to size. Place a rectangle in the base of the box and the cake on its board on the top, and the cake will stay still in the box.



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Moving cupcakes

Once upon a time, cupcakes were unlovingly crammed into a normal cake box or even a flat cardboard vegetable box from the supermarket. But the meteoric rise in popularity of cupcakes over the past few years has led to the cupcake having many modes of transport specially designed for it. These range from plain, flat boxes and boxes with partitions to special clear plastic carriers, which will transport your creations safely to their destination. Any of these methods are fine; the only note of caution is, if you are using the plastic cake carriers to carry cakes with fondant decorations, then try not to leave your cakes sealed inside for too long, because fondant may start to droop and sweat in airtight conditions.

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Keeping cake pops intact

How do you transport 50 swaying cake pops on lollipop sticks? The cheap and easy answer is to wedge a thick section of polystyrene into a box or boxes and poke the lollipop sticks into that. The pops can then be displayed in small jars or glasses at the party. However, you can buy acrylic and cardboard cake pop holders online or from cake-decoration shops, which are fancy enough to transport the pops safely and to appear at the party!

