

## Vanilla Icing

1/2 pound (2 sticks) unsalted butter, softened  
6 to 8 cups confectioners' sugar  
1/2 cup milk (preferably nonfat, but any kind will do)  
2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract  
Food coloring (optional)

Place the butter in a large mixing bowl. Add 4 cups of the sugar a little bit at a time mixing well between each addition, then add the milk and the vanilla. With an electric mixer on medium speed, beat until smooth and creamy, 3 to 5 minutes. Gradually beat in two additional cups of sugar. If you prefer a thicker icing, continue to add sugar, beating well between each addition. Use the icing immediately or store at room temperature. (It will set if chilled.) It can be stored in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

Makes enough for one 2-layer 9-inch cake or 2 dozen cupcakes

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