

Juliet Sear
**THE CAKE
DECORATING
BIBLE**

Simple steps to creating
beautiful cupcakes, biscuits,
birthday cakes and more

CONTENTS

Cover

List of Recipes

About the Book

About the Author

Title Page

Dedication

Introduction

Cake Jargon and Supplies

Equipment and Tools

Preparation: Cake and Cookie Basics

RECIPES

FILLINGS AND COVERINGS

LAYERING AND CONSTRUCTING CAKES

ICING CAKES

STACKING CAKES

DECORATING CAKES AND COOKIES

Design Ideas: Cookies

Design Ideas: Cupcakes

Design Ideas: Mini Cakes

Design Ideas: Single Tier Cakes

Design Ideas: Modelling

Design Ideas: Multi Tier Cakes

Caketastrophes!

Templates

Stockists

Acknowledgements

Copyright



LIST OF RECIPES

Basic Covered Cake Balls

Basic Vanilla Cookies

Belgian Chocolate Ganache Buttercream

Brush Embroidery

Buttercream

Cake Jazzling

Chocolate Cigarillos

Chocolate Cupcakes

Chocolate Ganache Cupcakes

Cookie Explosion

Corset Fondant Cupcakes

Covering Cupcakes with Fondant Icing

Covering Cupcakes with Ganache

Covering Miniature Cakes with Marzipan and Sugarpaste

Covering with Buttercream

Covering with Chocolate Paste

Covering with Glossy Chocolate Ganache for Pouring

Covering with marzipan and sugar paste

Covering with Royal Icing

Creating Marbled, Swirled or Feathered Designs

Cut-Out Petals

Dark Belgian Chocolate Paste

Design Ideas: Cupcakes
Design Ideas: Multi Tier Cakes
Design Ideas: Single Tier Cakes

Airlyland Mushroom Cake
Gondant Icing
Four-Tier Stand to Display 30-40 Cupcakes or Mini Cakes
Fresh Raspberry and Strawberry Buttercream

Manache Rose Corsage Cake
Littered Cookies
Lossy Chocolate Ganache for Pouring

Hand-Moulded Roses

Ice Cream Cookies

Layering the Rich Belgian Chocolate Truffle Cake
Layering the Very Vanilla and Lemon Drizzle Sponges
Lemon Drizzle Sponge

Making Run-Outs with Royal Icing
Masculine Ganache Cake

Metal-Paste 3D Shapes
Piping Straight Lines
Printed Cookies
Print-Wrap

Rich Belgian Chocolate Truffle Cake
Rich Boozy Fruit Cake
Rose Garden Cookies
Royal Icing

eparated Stacked Cakes

ilhouettes Celebration Cake

preading Buttercream onto Cupcakes

tacking a One-Piece Cake using Dowels

tacking with Pillars

sing Cutters

anilla Bean Buttercream and Variations

ery Vanilla Cupcakes

ery Vanilla Sponge

intage Buttercream Cupcakes

intage Button Cake

hen a Girl Needs Cake

hite Belgian Chocolate Paste

esty Orange Cupcakes



ABOUT THE BOOK

Juliet Sear is cake-maker extraordinaire, baker to the stars and owner of the fabulously decadent *Fancy Nancy* bakery in Essex. Her breathtaking, show-stopping cakes and biscuits see celebrity and style magazines flocking to get a glimpse of her latest extravaganza. Now you can learn the secrets, tricks and insider tips to making and decorating your own stunning baked creations.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Formerly with the Little Venice Cake Company, Juliet Sear now runs *Fancy Nancy* (www.fancynancy.info), her own successful cake boutique in Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, selling celebration cakes, cupcakes, cake pops and cookies. She has been praised widely for her contemporary edge, stunning designs and the supreme taste of her cakes. *Fancy Nancy* supplies Harvey Nichols across the UK and Juliet runs classes at Leiths School of Food and Wine.



**THE CAKE
DECORATING
BIBLE**

Juliet Sear
of Fancy Nancy



**THE CAKE
DECORATING
BIBLE**

Juliet Sear
of Fancy Nancy



THE
IVY
PRESS

FOR SIMON, GEORGE, LYDIA AND RUBY



INTRODUCTION

I have always been interested in cooking and baking. When I met my husband I would cook up three-course meals with starters and puddings, partly, I think, to impress him, but mostly because I liked the feeling of achievement. Having a happy and adoring customer was also a good source of motivation.

My relationship with cakes, however, really started after I had my first child, over 13 years ago. Like many new mums, I was at home and had the urge to put on fairy-tale birthday parties, topped off with a great big, themed birthday cake: something that would impress the kids and probably the other mums as well. Teletubbies, Power Rangers, castles; whatever was in vogue at the time, I gave it a go.

I really enjoyed it and, before too long, admirers started to ask if I would bake and decorate cakes for them too. This turned into a little home business and within a few years I was baking weekly orders for a local café. It gave me some cash, a focus beyond my kids (I had three under the age of three) and a sense of enjoyment. However, I felt that the quality of my work was okay for an amateur but, having not had any formal training beyond home economics at school, I had reached a ceiling.

I got a bee in my bonnet about it, and over the next few years, whilst balancing commitments with the kids, I followed a short course at the Cordon Bleu cookery school, and undertook some work experience before getting a part-time job at the Little Venice Cake Company in Marylebone, London, where I worked for about 18 months.

In 2006 I set up my cake-making business, Fancy Nancy, trading from home for the first couple of years before moving into a shop

with a bakery and decorating facilities in April 2009. These days, I have a team of half a dozen people and hundreds of customers. I get regular calls from magazines and TV producers for innovative designs and have made cakes for the likes of Eamonn Holmes, Dizze Rascal, Holly Willoughby, Sir Ian McKellen, Richard Madeley, Bryan Adams, Fearne Cotton, Bob and Pixie Geldof....

It's been a long journey and not always easy. But despite the stress of it all, I really do enjoy designing and making cakes. I love the creativity of it and the fulfilment I get at seeing someone filled with joy when they come to pick up their cake or see it at their venue for the first time.

This book catalogues what I have learnt on the journey and passes on the methods that my team and I use in the Fancy Nancy kitchen every day. It explains techniques and shares trade secrets and clever shortcuts on how to get a perfect finish, how to bake the perfect chocolate cake, how to match the right cupcake sponge to topping, how to pick out the right design and a whole lot more.

Above and beyond everything, this book is full of practical know-how on creating shop-quality cakes in your own home.





CAKE JARGON AND SUPPLIES

In the world of cake decorating there are words, phrases and supplies that you may be unfamiliar with. Here they are explained.

ACETATE PAPER

A translucent, plastic, flexible paper that is used for creating run-outs. Because it is clear, you can trace images through it. If you find this hard to get hold of, you can use plastic stationery document wallets in its place.

BAKING PARCHMENT

A thick, moisture-proof, greaseproof paper used to line baking tins and trays. It can also be used to make piping bags.

BLEEDING

When one colour of icing runs or spreads into another; lighter-coloured icings can get stained by stronger ones. This happens most commonly with combinations of light and dark, especially on run-outs, or cookies decorated with royal icing.

BLOOMING

This is when chocolate gets unattractive white patches on its surface. The bloom can be caused by the fat or the sugar; the chocolate is still fine to eat and will still taste the same, but is less appealing to the eye. This can occasionally happen on a ganache cake if you keep it for a while.

BRUSH EMBROIDERY

A decorating technique where a piped royal-icing outline is brushed inwards with a soft, damp brush to create an embroidered effect.

CRUST OR SKIN OVER

A term used to describe when an icing surface or royal-icing run-outs start to dry out and form a hard crust on the surface. This prevents one colour from staining another; in cake decorating you often have to wait for this to happen before moving on to the next step.

DUST COLOURS

These are non-toxic powders, available in many colours and shades. You can use them to decorate dried sugar decorations or they can be mixed with vodka or cocoa butter to create a paint that you can use for cake decorating. You can apply them with a dry brush to give your sugar decorations more depth and varied colours.

EDIBLE-INK CARTRIDGES

Cartridges filled with edible ink (food colouring), which can be used with a normal printer as long as the printer is used for edible ink only.

EDIBLE PAPER/EDIBLE SHEETS

Edible paper made from sugar. As well as being used in edible-ink printers to produce edible pictures and patterns, it can be airbrushed, and easily cut into shapes, e.g. for fairy wings.

FLOODING

This is when you fill in a royal-icing outline with a more liquid royal-icing colour, to give blocks or shapes of colour to decorate a cookie or cake. This is how run-outs are made.

FORMERS

These are solid forms or shapes used to dry sugar flowers, leaves or pieces, e.g. sugar shoes on. You can buy plastic formers for many purposes or indeed make your own using old, dry sugarpaste wrapped in cling film, or even using folded card.

GANACHE

A mixture of chocolate and cream used for filling or covering a cake.

GLITTERISING

When you apply non-toxic glitter to the surface of a cake, cookie or sugar decoration to add magical sparkliness. Non-toxic glitter is considered safe to use, but if you prefer not to use glitter, you can substitute it with 'sanding sugars'. These are coloured sugars that glimmer but are not as sparkly as glitter ([see here](#)).

GLYCERINE

Glycerine is a sweet, clear, odourless syrup that is available in supermarkets and from cake-decorating suppliers. It is a softening agent that is extracted from fats and oils, and in cake decorating it is primarily used as an addition to royal icing, to prevent the icing from becoming too hard, allowing you to cut through the iced covering more easily. Without it, royal icing sets rock-hard and will break up when a knife is inserted into the cake.

GUIDE STICKS OR MARZIPAN SPACERS

You can buy these from sugarcraft suppliers; they are used to ensure an even thickness when rolling out sugarpaste, marzipan, chocolate coatings or cookie dough.

GUM ARABIC

When gum arabic is mixed with water, it can be used as a glaze for marzipan, or as edible glue for sugarpaste. As a glaze, it gives the decoration a glossy sheen.

GUM TRAGACANTH

This is a plant-derived chemical that can be used to stiffen sugarpaste to make it set harder and hold its shape. It's particularly handy for modelling, when you need shapes to stay in form.

LEVELLING

To make your cake or icing level on the surface.

LIQUID GLUCOSE

Also known as glucose syrup, this is a viscous sugar solution of glucose suspended in liquid, which is sold in jars or tubs. It is now more readily available and can be bought from the baking section of supermarkets, from chemists, or from chocolate and baking suppliers. It is used to make chocolate paste, as when added to chocolate, it allows the chocolate to be moulded or rolled out.

LUSTRE DUST

Lustre dusts are non-toxic powders that come in many different colours and metallic shades. Sugar flowers, embellishments or iced surfaces can be decorated with lustre to give them a twinkling, metallic effect. Lustre dusts can be mixed with vodka or cocoa butter and painted directly onto sugar decorations or a cake itself, though the dust can also be applied dry.

LUSTRE SPRAY

An edible spray that can be used to decorate and add sheen to a cake's surface or to sugar decorations to give a metallic sheen. It is much quicker than painting on lustre dust.

MARBLING

When two or more colours of icing are added to a base coat of Royal icing, and a cocktail stick is then dragged through them to create a swirly, patterned effect.

PALETTE KNIFE

A tool used to spread and smooth fillings or icings.

PASTE COLOURING

Professional, strong, cake-decorating colourings with a paste or gel-like consistency that is stronger and more intense than liquid food colouring, and does not affect the consistency of sugarpaste or liquid icings. You can buy these from cake-decorating suppliers or online, and even some supermarkets are now starting to stock them.

PEARLS

Small round piped dots of royal icing.

PETAL PASTE

A stiff sugarpaste that is used for making flowers. It can be rolled very thinly and sets rock-hard, so that petals look less chunky and more realistic. It dries out very quickly. I also use this for making sugar buttons.

PIPING

When you force royal icing, buttercream or melted chocolate out of a bag through a nozzle, to create a message, add detail or texturise a cake.

PIPING BAG OR PASTRY BAG

Cone-shaped bags made out of plastic, fabric or paper, used for piping royal icing, buttercream and melted chocolate. You can buy these easily or save money by making your own using baking

parchment ([see here](#)). They can be used by themselves or with piping nozzles.

PIPING GEL

A sugary gel that can be used for many different aspects of cake decorating, including glazing sugarpaste or to give a sheen. It can be tinted with colours or added to metallic lustres to give cakes a shiny finish. You can also use it to create novelty effects, such as the suggestion of water. I prefer the Squires Kitchen brand because the gel is clearer and much easier to apply than many.

PIPING NOZZLES, TUBES OR TIPS

Used for piping lines, swirls, flowers, patterns and messages onto cakes using royal icing, buttercream or melted chocolate. I recommend only stainless-steel nozzles, as these are much better quality than the plastic variety. Piping nozzles come in many shapes and sizes, including circle, star or leaf-tip openings, allowing the user to pipe different shapes and create various effects. The simple round-tip nozzles come in standard sizes that indicate the dimension of the opening; all cake-decorating suppliers and online stores use the same sizes. For example, piping nozzles used for writing and lace embroidery are either No. 2 or No. 3, which have 2mm and 3mm openings respectively. No. 1 or No. 1.5 nozzles can be used for very fine detail, such as tiny pearls in a lace pattern, linear patterns or facial details on small figurines. The star or flower-shaped nozzles come in a variety of different shapes and most catalogues and websites offer a visual guide or drawing as to what kind of iced effect each tip will produce.

PLUNGER CUTTER

A cake-decorating cutter that cuts out, then ejects, a shape. These are now available in many different shapes; they are quick and easy to use.

PRESSURE PIPING

A piping technique that uses varying amounts of pressure to create a more shaped piped line, with thicker parts in the pattern that trail off to thinner parts, and vice versa.

ROLLED FONDANT

Another name for sugarpaste ([see here](#)).

ROYAL ICING

A white or coloured liquid icing that sets hard. It is made with icing sugar, egg white and lemon juice, and can have glycerine added to it when being used to cover a cake, to keep it softer and slightly easier to cut through. It is a fairly old-fashioned cake covering (rolled pastes are more commonly used nowadays).

RUN-OUT

This is a decoration or shape made by piping a border or outline with royal icing, then filling or 'flooding' the outlined areas with a more liquid royal icing, in whatever colours you like. Also known as flood work, these can be piped onto baking parchment or acetate paper or directly onto the surface of a cookie or cake. When the shape is dry, you have an icing decoration that can be used in many ways. You can even make run-outs on wires, cocktail sticks or skewers so that they can stand upright on a cake.

SANDING SUGAR

A large, granular sugar that comes in many colours and is used for cookie decorating or cake decorating to create a sparkly look.

SCORING

Scribing onto a cake to give you a guideline for writing over, marking out a shape or making a mark to indicate where you want to place a decoration or cake tier.

SILICONE OR PUSH MOULDS

Flexible moulds for making quick sugarpaste models, e.g. flowers, to use as decorations for the top of cakes and cupcakes. They come in hundreds of designs, including silicone moulds for giving sugarpaste a lace or textured pattern.

SNAGGING

When you get a rough finish or peak on icing pearls or trails, or a dent in the icing surface. You can correct snags by patting down rough peaks with a small, damp, clean paintbrush or by filling holes and dents with royal icing.

SNAIL TRAIL

When icing is piped around a cake in a continuous line, using any kind of nozzle to create a textured or shaped trailing line to finish or decorate.

SOFT PEAK

A term used to describe the consistency of royal icing. When the icing is lifted from the bowl with the back of a spoon or palette knife, it will have a peak that droops down and won't hold a stiff shape.

SPLITTING AND FILLING

Cutting a cake horizontally and sandwiching the two halves together with a flavoured filling, usually buttercream.

STIFF PEAK

A term used to describe royal icing mixed to a consistency that is stiff enough to hold a firm peak when lifted from the bowl with the back of a spoon or palette knife.

SUGARPASTE (OR ROLLED FONDANT)

An icing paste made from icing sugar, water and gelatin. It is usually purchased rather than made from scratch, as you can buy great-quality ready-made fondant. It is used for covering cakes and boards, and for making flowers, shapes and models.

TAIL

A tiny tail-like projection that forms on the tip of a piped pearl when the nozzle is lifted away. This spoils the roundness of your pearl; it can be rectified by patting down gently with a small, damp, clean paintbrush.

TEXTURISING

A method of adding a rough pattern or detailed finish to a cake.

VEINER

A rubber, plastic or silicone mould that can be used for marking and making impressions onto petal paste or sugarpaste to make leaves or flowers look more realistic. Some plunger cutters will cut out a shape and also make an impression at the same time, which saves the need for a separate veiner.



EQUIPMENT AND TOOLS

There are many fantastic things you can do with a minimum amount of cake decorating ‘stuff’. I have learnt over the years that if you haven’t got certain pieces of equipment, there are often handy things that you can substitute. When we’ve got a few cakes on the go at Fancy Nancy and run out of equipment, we often find ingenious solutions. And if you are just starting out you might not want to go and spend loads of money on tools, so it helps if you can adapt things you already have. For example, an upturned cake tin, book or bowl will work as a makeshift turntable. Therefore, throughout this book, I have suggested ways to improvise without the specified kit whenever possible.

However, as with anything, if you want to increase your repertoire then you need to invest time, and if you want to get quicker – and make the job easier – you need to get yourself a few pieces of invaluable kit. If you took up photography, you’d need a camera; for windsurfing you’d need a board and sail. The surge of interest in home baking and cake decorating has fuelled a huge increase in the amount of equipment available for cake decorators. There are some really innovative bits of kit on offer and it is worth investing in some of these useful tools if you have reached the stage of wanting to expand your cake-decorating horizons.

There is also a wide variety of exciting edible supplies you can use to make your cakes look amazing. It’s incredible what you can get, from gorgeous glitters in every imaginable colour to sugar decorations in hundreds of shapes, sizes and colours and edible prints or metallic embellishments. The list is endless and ever-expanding as the cake-decorating market grows. Of course, once you get into cake decorating you may want to make your own

versions of these but there is a huge array of ready-made sugar designs out there for the beginner to use in their own way on a lovingly-baked creation.

In this section I have listed the tools I refer to in this book as well as a few extra bits and pieces. I have also explained how to improvise without them whenever it is possible to do this.

BASICS AND BAKING

- A good-quality electric mixer (e.g. Kitchen Aid, Kenwood). You can use a hand mixer if you are short on cash, but it is really worth investing if you are serious about cake-making and decorating
- Mixing bowls in a range of sizes
- Wooden spoons
- Metal tablespoons and teaspoons
- Knives: large bread knife for cutting, splitting and filling cakes; large serrated knife; small sharp knife
- Large, medium and small palette knives – perfect for covering, spreading and carefully lifting up cakes
- Spatula
- Sieve
- Whisk
- Cake leveller
- Scissors
- Pastry brushes
- Cake tins in various shapes and sizes
- Muffin/cupcake trays
- Paper muffin cases

- Cookie cutters – can also be used for cutting sugarpaste
- Lolly/cookie sticks – for making lollipops or the Cookie Explosion cake [here](#)
- Non-stick baking parchment or paper (avoid normal greaseproof)
- Weighing scales – I recommend digital scales for the most accurate measurements, as it's important to be precise with baking recipes

CAKE DECORATING

Must-haves:

- Rolling pins (ideally plastic) – a large one for rolling out coverings for the top and sides of a cake (should be 8cm/3in larger than the diameter of the cake, so for a 20cm/8in cake a 35cm/14in) rolling pin is best) and a small plastic pin (15–20cm/6–8in), for rolling out small amounts of sugarpaste, or especially petal paste, for decorating
- Cake boards
- Piping bags
- Piping nozzles/tubes – these come in many sizes but a basic set includes No. 2 and No. 3 round nozzles and a simple star nozzle. It's easy to make your own leaf-tip nozzle by cutting down a piping bag to create a 'V' shape at the end.
- Scriber needle or pin tool (or use a regular pin with a ball head, but take care not to lose it!) – this is used for popping air bubbles, removing tiny particles or colour marks and marking out lettering or patterns on your cake

Nice-to-haves:

- Turntable

- Guide sticks or marzipan spacers – not essential but handy for ensuring an even thickness to cake coverings and cookie dough
- Side scraper (or a small plastic ruler as an alternative)
- Straight edge tool (you can use a metal or strong plastic ruler instead, but those generally only go up to 30cm/12in, so you can't use them for cakes that are any bigger)
- Cake smoothers: ideally two side smoothers and one top smoother
- Varying sizes of paintbrushes for dusting colours, painting and fixing mistakes
- Ribbon cutter – a handy, wheeled cutter that can be adjusted to cut different width strips of sugarpaste, chocolate or petal paste, as well as ribbon
- Ribbons
- Cake dowels – for stacking cakes. I find the extra-strong heavy-duty ones are the best option, especially for your base cake if you are stacking a few tiers
- Polystyrene cake dummies – shaped polystyrene 'fake' cakes. They come in many shapes besides round and square and are usually 7.5cm (3in) in depth
- Polystyrene separators – polystyrene squares or circles of a shallower depth than cake dummies; they come in 2.5cm (1in) and 5cm (2in) depths
- Projector – some people like to project images onto a cake's surface to aid with hand-painting or piping. It is not essential but great if you aren't good at freehand drawing and painting. Alternatively, you can print off a picture and mark out the edges by stabbing carefully through the paper with a pin to create a dotted line on the icing, then all you have to do is 'join the dots' with icing!

SUGARCRAFT MODELLING TOOLS

- Sugarcraft cutters – rose, blossom, daisy, calyx and leaf cutters, including plain metal cutters and also plunger-style cutters
- Silicone moulds and push moulds
- Foam or gel pad – this provides a soft surface to press against when making impressions on petal-paste shapes such as buttons or leaves, when frilling petals, or using plunger cutters; it ensures you get the veining or pattern from the plunger cutter
- Floppy mat – for covering petal paste to prevent it from drying out (you can use a large book wrapped in cling film as an alternative)
- Ball or bone tool – I find this invaluable and you'll need it for making buttons
- Dresden tool – a narrow, stick-like, plastic or wooden tool with tapered, spike-like ends, used in modelling to create lines, indentations and impressions, for example on a petal
- Scalpel
- Quilting or stitching wheels – handy little tools with removable wheels that give different effects

PACKAGING AND TRANSPORTATION

- Cake boxes
- Cupcake boxes
- Individual cupcake or portion boxes
- Cookie bags (I recently saw these in a supermarket baking section, or you can order from a specialist supplier)





PREPARATION: CAKE AND COOKIE BASICS

In order to produce perfect cakes or cookies at home, there are simple steps that you should follow to make sure that you get the best result. It's worth spending a few minutes on these steps; don't rush, as they can make life much easier in the long run.

With baking, and particularly cake decorating, you do need to invest your time. It's different from other types of cooking; you aren't just throwing together a quick spag bol or curry. It will take a bit more time and care, and sometimes needs to be spread out over a couple of days or more, but it's worth the effort because it's so rewarding.

CHOOSING A CAKE TIN

If you can, invest in a good tin to bake your cake in. At Fancy Nancy we use Invicta tins - the beauty of these is that they are all exactly the same height, 8cm (3in), which is a perfect depth for a celebration or wedding cake. We use this height as a guide for all our sponge cakes.

Of course you can use any tins, but if you are making a stacked cake, you want all the sponge tiers to be the same height so that the cake doesn't look odd. So do try to buy cake tins of the same depth if you want to try out my easy, foolproof method for preparing the sponges. You can still get good results with other tins, but when it comes to cake decorating, time saving and foolproofing are very important to me.

LINING CAKE TINS AND COOKIE TRAYS