



We recently sat down with our Senior Cake Decorator to get answers to some of the most common cake decorating questions we receive here at DecoPac. We welcome your questions and comments as well! Send them to us online!

Q: What size cake should I use to make your Petite Signature Cakes?

A: Our Petite Signature Cakes are made with two 4" layers of cake, stacked and trimmed (for the Princesses and Dora, trim the top in the shape of the top of a bell to create the shape of their skirts). If you don't stock or bake 4" cakes, consider using our 4" round cutter. It easily cuts perfectly-sized circles out of a standard sheet cake.

Q: How do I keep the crumbs out of my icing?

A: Apply a crumb coat! A crumb coat is a thin layer of icing, evenly applied with a spatula. Our decorator likes to crumb-coat her cakes chilled, which keeps the cake firm enough that crumbs won't give way to your spatula and spread around. A chilled cake will also chill the icing, causing it to hold itself intact. We recommend pre-crumbs-coating your cake inventory ahead of time; this will allow you to later base ice your cakes at room temperature with no fear of crumbing.

Q: How are dowel rods and pillars used, and what is the difference?

A: Hidden dowel rods are used to bear the weight of stacked cake layers. They are usually used three or four at a time, placed close to the center of each cake for best results. Be sure to use a sturdy, coated cake board between each layer so the weight of the cake is evenly distributed across the dowel rods.

Pillars are also used to bear weight, and to give the illusion of suspension. When stacking a cake, place the pillars as close to the middle as possible; this will allow more space for any fresh flowers, as well as creating a dramatic "floating" illusion.

Q: How do you get balloons or heart sprays to stay upright? Mine flop over from the weight of the gum paste.

A: For perfectly-positioned gum paste, use a hollow dowel for support. Wrap the wires of your gum paste spray around one another as tightly as possible. Cut a hollow dowel to the exact height of your cake, and insert the dowel into the cake and the spray into the dowel.

Or, wrap all the wires of your gum paste spray around a straw cut to the height of your cake, and press the straw into the cake.

If you want more height from your gum paste sprays, wrap the individual wires around one another for support before inserting into your cake. You can also twirl the wires around a dowel rod and then remove the rod, creating a fun, spiral effect and bringing the center of gravity lower for better weight support.

Q: How can I secure gum paste flowers and decorations onto the sides and top of my cakes? They always seem to fall off during delivery.

A: To securely apply bulkier gum paste decorations to a cake, wrap their wires around straws or cut dowels and insert into the cake where desired. The length that dowels or straws lend will structurally support the gum paste decoration with minimal impact to the cake itself. Be sure to remove before cutting and serving!

If applying flush or flat-type gum paste pieces, use a dab of royal icing or brush a little egg white onto the back of the flat piece and adhere to the cake. Be sure your icing or fondant is chilled and firm before applying gum paste in this manner.

Q: My customers always ask how to cut and serve your Signature Cakes. Help!

A: Within the item detail of each of our Signature Cakes, you will find downloadable PDF documents for step-by-step cake decorating instructions, as well as cake cutting instructions!

Q: How do I use a double-colored icing bag?

A: Fill each compartment of the double bag equally with desired colors. Cut ½" off the tip of the bag to fully expose both colors. Insert a coupler into an 18" or 21" standard bag. Insert the double-filled bag into the coupler of the standard bag. Ensure that the double bag is dropped down all the way into the coupler. Apply desired tip and coupler ring.

For larger tips, such as Grass Tip #234, the double-colored bag may be inserted directly into the larger standard bag using no coupler.

Hold and apply pressure to the outer bag as normal. This is a great technique for piping multi-toned trees, bushes, grass and some flowers. Be creative, and don't be afraid to try different combinations of colors and tips!

Q: Which tip do you use to ice cupcakes?

A: For most of the cupcakes shown in our catalog, our decorator used French Pastry Tip #869 (item #6776).

Q: Some of your cake designs look shiny! How did you get that effect?

A: You will find several items in our catalog that have a beautiful, shimmery luster. They have been sprayed with our Pearlescent Airbrush Spray, available in gold and silver.

The Pearlescent Airbrush Spray also have a stunning effect applied to Wedding and Anniversary cakes, Fairies and Princesses Cakes, Baby Cakes, Bubbles, Pearls, Balloons ... let your imagination go!

Q: I don't like using black icing because of the flavor and stain. How can I make a more appetizing black icing?

A: Our decorator's secret is to start with Chocolate buttercream. Add black as needed to darken the chocolate. This provides you with a black icing that tastes better because it uses less flavor-altering black food coloring.