

Man on the Moon Cake

Source: Shade Montague (www.madebyshade.com)

Servings: 6 **Prep Time:** 2 hours 20 minutes **Cook Time:** 16 minutes **Chill Time:** 13 hours

EQUIPMENT:

- 9" square pan
- Offset spatula
- Wire cooling rack
- 2 ½" diameter round cutter ([link](#))
- Peeler
- Small skillet
- Silicone dome molds in medium (1.5" diameter) and large (2.75" diameter) ([link](#))
- Medium saucepan
- Fine-mesh sieve
- Hand-mixer / Stand-mixer
- Large piping bag
- Turntable
- Melon baller / Small round spoon
- Toothpicks
- Airbrush compressor and nozzle ([link](#))

INGREDIENTS:

Cheddar Cake:

- ¾ cups flour, sifted
- ⅓ cup sugar
- ½ cup cheddar cheese powder (I used [Hoosier Hill Farm](#))
- 2 tsp cornstarch
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp baking powder
- ¼ tsp baking soda
- 4 tbsp butter, melted
- 1 ½ tbsp buttermilk
- 1 egg
- 2 tbsp hot water

INSTRUCTIONS:

Cheddar Cake (35 minutes + 16 minutes cooking)

Grease, flour, and line a 9" square pan with parchment paper. Preheat oven to 300° F.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, sugar, cheddar cheese powder, cornstarch, baking powder, baking soda, and salt.

Add the melted butter, buttermilk, and egg and whisk together.

Add the hot water and whisk together.

Pour the batter into the prepared pan, spreading evenly with an offset spatula to make sure it gets into all the corners.

Bake the cake for about 16 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.

Run an offset spatula around the outside edge to loosen the cake from the pan, then flip immediately onto a wire cooling rack.

Remove the pan and parchment paper. Let cool completely to room temperature, then wrap tightly in plastic wrap and freeze until firm.

Using a 2 ½" diameter round cutter, cut out six cheddar cakes. Trim the cakes so they are level and about ½" tall.

Apple Pie Filling:

- 1 medium Granny Smith apple
- 2 tbsp butter
- 2 ¼ tsp flour
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- 1 tbsp water
- ¼ tsp vanilla
- ¼ tsp cinnamon
- ⅛ tsp nutmeg

Vanilla Bean Diplomat Cream:

- ½ tsp gelatin powder
- 1 ½ tsp water, cold
- 1 cup whole milk, divided
- 1 tsp vanilla bean paste
- ⅓ cup sugar
- 2 tbsp cornstarch
- ⅛ tsp salt
- 2 large egg yolks
- ⅓ cup heavy whipping cream

Assembly:

- Liquid food dye (black, white)

Wrap each cake in plastic wrap, place on a plate or small baking sheet, and keep frozen until assembly.

Apple Pie Filling (20 minutes + 1 hour chilling)

Peel and dice the apple into small cubes, about ¼” in size. Set aside.

In a small skillet, melt the butter over medium heat.

Whisk in the flour until fully incorporated and mixture has thickened.

Whisk in the brown sugar, water, vanilla, cinnamon, and nutmeg.

Bring the mixture just to a boil then reduce the heat to a simmer.

Add the apples and let simmer until apples soften and mixture has thickened.

Remove from heat and scoop the apple pie filling into six of the medium dome molds, pressing down until the syrup rises all the way to the top.

Level the top with an offset spatula and scrape off any excess around the mold.

Cover with plastic wrap and freeze until solid, at least 1 hour. Keep frozen until needed.

Vanilla Bean Diplomat Cream (25 minutes + 2 hours chilling)

In a small bowl, whisk together the gelatin powder and cold water. Set aside to bloom.

In a medium saucepan, whisk together 1 ½ cups milk and the vanilla bean paste.

Cook over high heat, stirring often until it just starts to simmer. Remove from heat.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the sugar, cornstarch, and salt together until there are no lumps.

Add the remaining ½ cup milk and the egg yolks, whisking to combine.

While whisking vigorously, slowly pour the hot milk into the bowl to temper the egg mixture.

Return mixture to saucepan and cook over medium-high heat, whisking constantly, until it thickens and comes to a boil.

Remove from heat and whisk in the bloomed gelatin until fully combined.

Pass the pastry cream through a fine-mesh sieve and into a bowl.

Cover completely with plastic wrap, placing it directly on top of the cream to prevent a skin from forming.

Allow the pastry cream to cool to room temperature, then place in the refrigerator for a couple hours to set. Do not freeze.

In a medium bowl, with a hand-mixer or stand-mixer, whisk the heavy whipping cream on high speed until stiff peaks form. Set aside.

Remove the chilled pastry cream from the fridge and whisk briefly to loosen.

Gradually fold in a little of the pastry cream at a time into the whipped cream until just combined.

Transfer to a large piping bag with the tip cut off and set aside.

Assembly (1 hour + 10 hours chilling)

Pipe the diplomat cream into the six large dome molds, filling only halfway.

Remove six of the apple pie domes from the medium molds, placing one in the center of each of the cream-filled molds.

Press down until the cream rises around the sides of the apple pie dome to be level with the top.

Pipe a little bit more diplomat cream on top of the apple pie dome.

Remove the plastic wrap from the chilled cheddar cake rounds, placing one in each of the large dome molds.

Press down until the cream rises around the sides to be level with the top of the mold. Pipe more cream around the sides of the cake, if necessary. Reserve the leftover diplomat cream in the fridge for patching any air pockets later.

Scrape any excess off the top of the cakes so they're perfectly level.

Cover with plastic wrap and chill in the freezer for at least 8 hours, or overnight.

Remove the frozen cakes from the large dome molds and place on a parchment

lined baking sheet. Keep the cakes frozen when not working on them.

Take one cake out at a time and place it on a parchment-covered turntable.

If there are any gaps or pockets of air on the surface of the cake, pipe some of the reserved diplomat cream into the gaps and let harden, about 30 seconds to a minute.

Scrape away any excess and smooth with the pad of your finger. Don't worry if it's not perfect, the surface of the moon is quite bumpy anyway!

Using the edge of a melon baller, or small spoon, carve little craters into the surface of the cake.

Using a toothpick, poke and scratch the outside of the cake to create texture.

Return the cake to the freezer when finished carving and repeat for the other cakes.

Starting with the first cake again, place it on a parchment-covered turntable surrounded on three sides by cardboard (to prevent dye from getting all over the kitchen).

In a small bowl, mix together a couple drops each of the black and white liquid food dye, until a medium gray color is achieved. Pour this into the appropriate spot on your airbrush nozzle.

Using the airbrush, lightly spray the outside of the cakes with grey dye until there is no white diplomat cream visible.

If desired, you can add a little more black dye to your bowl to get a slightly darker grey, and very lightly spray the cakes again from a distance, to give them more dimension.

Let the cakes thaw in the fridge for a couple hours, or overnight, before serving. Leftovers may be kept covered in the fridge, up to a week.

Enjoy!