



Module 8 - Section 3 - Covering the cakes

Objective: Produce a smooth and neatly finished marble sugarpaste/fondant effect.

In completing each section the user will be able to:

- Achieve a smooth, neatly iced double barrel cake
- Achieve a clean, neat, sharp, edge
- Produce a neat sugarpaste/fondant iced cake drum
- Produce coloured sugarpaste/fondant
- Achieve a marbled sugarpaste/fondant
- Neatly wrap the cake with the marbled sugarpaste/fondant

Assessment criteria:

1. Achieve a smooth, neatly iced double barrel cake
2. Achieve a clean, neat, sharp, edge
3. Produce a neat sugarpaste/fondant iced cake drum
4. Produce coloured sugarpaste/fondant
5. Achieve a marbled sugarpaste/fondant
6. Neatly wrap the cake with the marbled sugarpaste/fondant

You will Need:

The tools and ingredients required for the completed cake are contained in Section 2- Ganaching the tiers.

Method:

It is highly recommended that the accompanying video is viewed prior to and in conjunction with the method and notes below.

For the bottom and top tiers of the cake:

- Gather all the required tools ensuring that they, and the work surfaces, have been thoroughly cleaned and all hygiene standards are fully compliant
- Soften 2kg of sugarpaste/fondant (paste) and roll out to a circle approximately 2" bigger than the circumference of the base tier, at a depth of 4mm
- Spray the cake lightly with boiled, cooled water to make it tacky
- Cover the base tier with the rolled paste
- Remove any air bubbles, smooth the paste on the top and down the first 2.5cm of the side to attach to the cake
- Where there are folds, stretch sideways and brush upwards with cupped hand (as demonstrated by Paul in the video)
- Repeat all round the cake until all folds have been smoothed out and then smooth gently around the sides using your hands
- Work around the edge between thumbs and forefingers

- Using the straight edged smoother, work around the cake to make a line where you want to trim away the excess icing where the cake meets the board.
- Follow the line to trim away excess paste
- Roll up excess paste and store for further use e.g. to make the covering for the cake drum
- Using the smoother, polish and smooth the sides at the bottom of the cake, then smooth the top
- Form the sharp edge using the 'slapping movement' described in the video
- Using the acetate/flexi smoothers, finish the sharp edge
- Check for air bubbles and remove any using a thin pointed implement/scribe inserted at a 45 degree angle
- Repeat this process with the top tier
- Ice the cake drum using the 'lift-over method'
- Weigh the cakes and record how much paste has been used

Middle tier

- Split 1kg of paste into 4 pieces of the following approximate weights: 400g, 300g, 170g and 130g
- Add colour to the three smaller pieces as required for the cake design (Paul used grey, pink and purple)
- Roll each piece into a sausage and divide into three. Lay each piece on the worksurface making sure that no two pieces of the same colour are in juxtaposition. Squeeze together, then roll and twist. Once the colours are mixed in, soften into a ball ready to roll
- Make a template for the cake circumference with some clean ribbon/string and measure the height of cake
- Roll out a rectangle of paste to 4mm, long enough to wrap around the cake, allowing some extra for the overlap
- Leave to set for 30-60 minutes to allow the paste to firm up slightly
- Ice the cake top using the icing left from the rectangle
- Wrap the side of the cake with the rectangle of paste now that it's firmed up
- Using scissors, cut the top edge of the wrap giving a uneven, snapped finish
- Use fingers or tweezers to make the edge jagged
- Leave overnight to set
- Remember to weigh the cake to calculate the amount of icing you have used

Supporting Notes:

Before getting started, first make sure that all surfaces and equipment have been thoroughly cleaned. Ensure that all food hygiene regulations are being followed to ensure that the cake is completely free from contamination.

Cake covering is perhaps the area of decoration that gets most closely judged. A cake decorators skill level will often be assessed from their ability to create a smooth, blemish free covering. It is very important to ensure that time and practice is undertaken to ensure that a professional finish becomes second nature.

Double barrel cakes are becoming very popular as their size gives off a sense of grandeur. A double barrel cake is two or three tiers of the same diameter, stacked on top of each other to form one deeper tier. Depending on the cake depth, a double barrel cake can be 8"-10" tall, but 8" is a more manageable height.

Before starting, gather all the required tools and ensure the cleanliness of the work area ensuring that the cake decorator meets required hygiene standards.

Covering the base and top tiers

Start with the base tier which will always be the biggest cake. Choose a firm, flexible paste that will not crack easily. These tend to be the more expensive brands, but to get a neat, smooth finish it is arguably worth the extra cost.

Soften 2kg of paste, then roll out to a circle approximately 2" bigger than the target covering area of the cake to a depth of 4mm. Avoid putting the paste into the microwave to speed up the softening because it alters the sugar crystals. It is better to soften in smaller pieces and then combine into one large ball, knead to form a smooth surface to roll on, and press down with your hands prior to rolling out.

Work as quickly as you can to prevent the sugarpaste cracking. The rolling technique should be to roll forward and back, lift the paste and turn a little. This makes sure that the paste does not stick and is rolled evenly. Icing sugar should be dusted on the worksurface to prevent sticking. Try to keep this to a minimum to prevent drying out the icing, which would cause cracking. Polish the paste using the smoother. Remember that the rolled side of the paste is the cleaner and smoother side and should be uppermost on the cake.

Prepare the cake for covering by spraying lightly with boiled, cooled water. Lift the icing onto the rolling pin and allow the edge of the icing to touch the edge of the cake drum, then flip onto the cake and over the other side.

Smooth the paste on the top and down the first 2.5cm of the side to start with. This will help secure the paste to the cake, but will create folds around the side. The first fold can be removed by stretching sideways and brushing upwards with a cupped hand. The second, and subsequent folds are brushed up at a slight angle towards the cake decorator. Repeat all round the cake until all folds have been smoothed out, then the cake can be smoothed using your hands.

Work round the edge between thumbs and forefingers. Smooth the sides of the cake by massaging using your hands. Then, using a straight edged smoother, mark around the cake where the cake meets the board then trim away the excess paste. Roll up the excess paste and store for later as it can be used to cover the cake drum.

Now that the cake is covered, it is time to smooth the paste to achieve a high standard finish. Hold the smoother to ensure that the whole hand is in control of the smoother. Hold with the thumb above the handle of the smoother, with the fingers touching as much of the smoother as possible and the index finger extended to aid control. Hold the smoother horizontally, then start to polish the sides at the bottom of the cake, then turn the smoother to the vertical position and smooth the entire side. Finally smooth the top. You may want to put the cake on a non stick mat as you prepare to work on the sharp edge of the cake.

To form the sharp edge use two smoothers and gently warm the paste through the heat of the smoothers. This allows the paste to be moulded easier to create the sharp edge finish. Hold the straight edged smoother on the side in the vertical position and the round edged smoother flat on the edge of the top of the cake in the horizontal position. Working in small circular movements, on the top edge, bring the smoothers together where they will occasionally touch creating a 'clapping' sound. The circular motions and bringing together will generate a neat edge finish.

Using the acetate/flexible smoothers finish the sharp edge. They are held between the thumb and index finger. The smoother on the side is vertical and the one on the top is horizontal. As the smoothers are working, bring the fingers together and the acetates must touch and rub together. Using a circular movement, followed by a side to side movement to bring the sugarpaste to a sharp edge. Work on small sections, and work around the top. You may need to stop at intervals to work the top and sides with the plastic smoother to retain the shape. This process will work the sugarpaste gently up to a sharp edge.

Once the paste has been smoothed, remove any air bubbles using a thin pointed implement/scribe inserted at a 45 degree angle, then smooth the affected area with the cake smoother. Repeat this process with the top tier, which will always be the smallest cake.

Icing the cake drum

An iced cake drum gives a more professional look and finish. Unless the design specifically dictates otherwise, every wedding cake drum should be covered in paste (iced).

There are a number of ways to achieve this, but in this design Paul opts for the 'lift-over' method as shown in the video. This method saves time, is easy to achieve and saves sugarpaste/fondant. Start by brushing some boiled then cooled water onto the cake drum. Water allows a degree of movement with the paste, which is required for this process. The use of glue does not give the same movement.

Roll out enough paste to cover the circumference of the cake drum, with a little extra around the sides, to 4mm thickness. Cut out a circle, approximately 2.5cm smaller than the circumference of the cake. Lift the paste onto the rolling pin, then flip over the cake. The paste will move down the sides and a gentle stretch will bring it down to the cake drum.

Gently pull out until there is a small edge of the silver cake board visible at the bottom of the cake. Gently push the icing in towards the cake until it butts against the side of the cake. Secure to the board using the straight edged smoother then cut away the excess. Weigh the cakes and record how much sugarpaste has been used.

Covering the middle tier

An alternative way to cover the cake is using the wrap method, which can use marbled paste to create effect.

To create the marble effect, start by taking 1kg of paste and divide it into 4 pieces into the following weights 400g, 300g, 170g and 130g. The largest piece will remain white and you will add three colours to the other pieces as required for the cake design (Paul used grey, pink and purple). Pro gel colours are best for colouring paste as they are more condensed and create a more intense colour.

Roll each piece into a sausage and divide into three. Lay each piece side by side on the worksurface, making sure that two pieces of the same colour are not in juxtaposition. Squeeze them together then roll and twist until you get a good mix, then soften into a ball ready to roll.

To make sure your measurements are correct, make a template to measure the circumference of the cake, clean ribbon/string would be perfect. Then measure the height of the cake and roll out a rectangle of the marbled paste to 4mm thickness, which is long enough to wrap around the cake, allowing for an overlap.

Leave to set for 30-60 minutes to firm up slightly, which will make it more firm and easier to handle.

Before wrapping the cake, remember to cover the top panel. Simply cut out a circle to fit then position and stick into place. Lifting the paste carefully, it is now time to wrap the middle tier. Once in place, using scissors, cut the paste at the top edge of the wrap to give an uneven, jagged finish. Leave overnight to set. Then weigh the cake to calculate the amount of icing you have used.