

# Celebrate Every Day!

FAMILY FEATURES

**D**id you know that everyday baking is almost as popular as holiday baking? Wilton recently released the results of its bi-annual Celebration Report on How Americans Bake, Decorate and Celebrate. In it, 73 percent of the respondents said they bake for everyday enjoyment and treats, while 78 percent said they bake for holidays.

## Decorated Cakes Are #1!

Decorated cakes are the #1 favorite celebration dessert, according to 90 percent of those polled for the Celebration Report.

### Floral Fondant Bouquet

Makes 12 to 15 servings

- 1 box (18.25 ounces) yellow cake mix
- 2 containers (15 ounces each) part-skim ricotta cheese, divided
- 4 eggs
- 1/4 cup water
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 3/4 cup confectioners' sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 cup miniature semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1 cup thawed non-dairy whipped topping
- 1 package (10 ounces) Vanilla Whipped Icing Mix

Preheat oven to 325°F. Spray two 8-inch round cake pans with vegetable cooking spray; set aside.

In large bowl, beat cake mix, 1 container ricotta cheese, eggs, water and oil with electric mixer on low speed for 30 seconds. Increase speed to medium; beat for 2 minutes or until smooth. Divide batter evenly between prepared pans.

Bake 32 to 35 minutes or until golden brown and firm to the touch. Let cakes cool in pans on cooling grid 10 minutes. Remove from pans and cool completely.

Meanwhile, for filling, place remaining ricotta cheese in food processor; pulse several times until smooth. Add sugar and cinnamon; pulse until just combined. Scrape cheese filling into medium bowl; fold in chocolate chips and whipped topping. Cover and refrigerate until ready to use.

To assemble cake, cut both layers in half horizontally, forming 4 thin layers. Place one layer on cake board or serving plate; spread 1/3 of filling onto layer. Repeat with remaining 3 layers and filling.

Prepare icing mix following package instructions. Spoon ice cake. See sidebar for options to create or purchase Flower Decorations. Position flowers on top of cake, fill in with leaves. Arrange additional flowers and leaves along bottom border.

Look for fondant, decorating tools, pre-made icing flowers and Wraps 'N Pix at craft and hobby stores, or order from [www.wilton.com](http://www.wilton.com).

### Flower Decorations

Choose a decorating option.

- I'm up for creating my own fondant flowers and leaves!**  
Make fondant flowers and leaves in advance, allowing for plenty of time to dry.  
**Purchase:**  
1 package (4.4 ounces) Neon Colors Fondant Multi Pack  
1 package (4.4 ounces) Pastel Colors Fondant Multi Pack (green used)  
Flower and Leaf Cut-Outs  
Roll out neon pink, purple and orange fondant 1/16 to 1/8 inch thick. Using medium Flower Cut-Out, cut flowers. Shape on thick Fondant Shaping Foam using ball tool; place in Flower Formers dusted with cornstarch to dry. Roll small balls of yellow fondant; attach to flowers with damp brush. Roll out pastel green fondant 1/8 inch thick; cut leaves using varied sizes of Leaf Cut-Outs. Place on thin foam. Using veining tool, mark vein lines. Dry completely; if desired, dry in flower formers dusted with cornstarch.
- I'm a budding novice!**  
**Purchase:** Pre-made royal icing flowers and leaves.  
**Decorate:** Position and arrange flowers per recipe directions.

## BAKE-AND-DECORATE PROJECTS MADE EASY



**Nancy Siler**

Visit [www.wilton.com](http://www.wilton.com) to subscribe to the "Ask Nancy" video podcast series for more great tips on baking and decorating. Wilton has been the industry leader in cake decorating, quality bakeware and food crafting for more than 80 years.



## Decorated Cookies Make Every Day Special!

The report showed that cookies are America's most popular baked treat, according to 82 percent of respondents. A variety of cookie cutter shapes and colored icings turn these treats into a celebration.

### Pecan Shortbread Cookies

Makes about 2 dozen 3-inch cookies

- 3/4 cup (1-1/2 sticks) butter, softened
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 3 egg yolks
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2/3 cup finely ground pecans (about 2 ounces)
- 1 can (16 ounces) White Decorator Icing
- 1 can (16 ounces) Chocolate Decorator Icing
- Rose, Lemon Yellow, Kelly Green or other desired Icing Color

In large bowl, beat butter, sugar and salt with electric mixer at medium speed 1 minute. Add yolks, one at a time, mixing well after each. Add vanilla; mix well. Add flour and pecans all at once; mix just until combined. Press dough into a disc; wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate at least 2 hours or overnight.

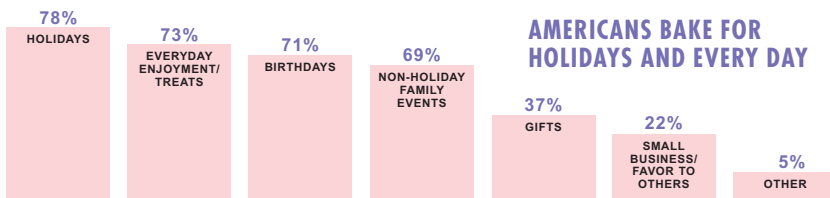
Preheat oven to 375°F. Let cold dough stand at room temperature 10 minutes. Roll dough 1/8 inch thick on lightly floured work surface. Cut with cutters into Butterfly, Blossom, Round and Square shapes. Place on ungreased cookie sheet. Bake 10 to 12 minutes or until light golden brown. Remove cookies to cooling grid; cool completely.

### Tint icing as desired. Cooled decorating ideas:

- Outline and fill in cookies with tip 3; smooth with finger dipped in cornstarch. Add contrasting colored dots, dot flowers, swirls, or lattice as desired.
- Pipe tip 7 dots in center of Flower Cookie. Decorate petals with tip 3 or 7 outline, smoothing with finger dipped in cornstarch, or tip 3, 7 or 16 zigzag.
- Cover Butterflies with tip 16 stars or zigzags, or tip 3 or 7 lines. Add tip 3 or 7 dots and elongated dots.
- For Squares, pipe tip 7 ribbons and tip 3 bows or pipe lattice and dots using either tip.

## Cupcakes Are Tops for Kids!

Celebration Report respondents favored cupcakes as a baking and decorating activity for kids' parties. Start with a cake mix, and bake up a batch. Then, get the kids involved! Take cupcakes to new heights with a fancy icing swirl and a shake of colorful sprinkles or sugars. Make them extra special with fun-themed Wraps 'N Pix. Get more tips at [www.wilton.com](http://www.wilton.com).



The biannual Celebration Report by Wilton is an extensive online survey conducted by a third party.