

# Red velvet cake essay sample



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

A red velvet cake is a cake with a dark red, bright red or red-brown color. It is traditionally prepared as a layer cake topped with cream cheese or cooked roux icing. The reddish color is achieved by adding red food coloring.

Common ingredients include buttermilk, butter, flour, cookie dough for the filling, cocoa, and beetroot or red food coloring. The amount of cocoa used varies in different recipes. Cream cheese frosting and buttercream frosting are commonly used.

#### History:

James Beard's 1972 reference *American Cookery*[1] describes three red velvet cakes varying in the amounts of shortening and butter, also Vegetable Oil. All use red food coloring, but the reaction of acidic vinegar and buttermilk tends to better reveal the red anthocyanin in the cocoa and keeping the cake moist, light and fluffy. Before more alkaline "Dutch Processed" cocoa was widely available, the red color would have been more pronounced. This natural tinting may have been the source for the name "red velvet" as well as "Devil's Food" and similar names for chocolate cakes. [2][3] When foods were rationed during World War II, bakers used boiled beets to enhance the color of their cakes. Boiled grated beets or beet baby food are found in some red velvet cake recipes, where they also serve to retain moisture. Adams Extract, a Texas-based company, is credited for bringing the red velvet cake to kitchens across America during the time of the Great Depression by being one of the first to sell red food color and other flavor extracts with the use of point-of-sale posters and tear-off recipe cards. [4][5]

The cake and its original recipe, however, are well-known in the United States from New York City's famous Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. However, it is widely considered a Southern recipe.[3] Traditionally, the cake is iced with a French-style butter roux icing (also called ermine icing), which is very light and fluffy but time-consuming to prepare. Cream cheese frosting and buttercream frosting are variations which have increased in popularity. Beetroot or beets are not used in the Southern version of the red velvet recipe. In Canada the cake was a well-known dessert in the restaurants and bakeries of the Eaton's department store chain in the 1940s and 1950s. Promoted as an exclusive Eaton's recipe, with employees who knew the recipe sworn to silence, many mistakenly believed the cake to be the invention of the department store matriarch, Lady Eaton.[6] A resurgence in the popularity of this cake is partly attributed to the 1989 film *Steel Magnolias* in which the groom's cake (a southern tradition) is a red velvet cake made in the shape of an armadillo.[3] In recent years, red velvet cake has become increasingly popular and can usually be found in most bakeries.