



HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN FONDANT FROM SCRATCH

with Illustrated Step-By-Step Instructions
100% Marshmallow-Free! • © 2007 by Paul of CakesCanada.com

If you've ever made Marshmallow Fondant (MMF) and assumed it was the only possible alternative to purchased fondant, this should be a very easy tutorial to follow because you've basically done all these steps before.

If this will be the first time you attempt to make your own fondant, you'll be surprised how simple it really is to make.

Fondant from Scratch is one way to control the flavour and sweetness of your fondant that you really do not have in either marshmallow or purchased products. We won't go into all the reason why you might choose this over other types of fondant, there are a LOT of variable where one or the next has positive or negative aspects. All we're looking to do here is see how simple it is to make. So if you normally purchase or make MMF, you'll have an alternative once you've learned how to make Fondant from Scratch.

So let's start. Once you have gathered all your ingredients, making this fondant should take about 12 to 15 minutes, including kneading. Let's begin by reviewing what you'll need.



The impressive list of ingredients you see pictured above consists of:

- 2 lbs (908 g) of sifted confectioner's sugar
- 1 packet of gelatin (1 tablespoon)
- ½ cup of white corn syrup
- 1/2 teaspoon of flavouring.

- 1 tablespoon of glycerin.
- ¼ cup cold water (not shown as you probably know what water looks like.)
- Optional: food colours if you want to pre-mix the whole batch one colour

Tips:

You may want to sift 3 lbs just in case you need extra, you can always put leftovers back in your sugar bin.

I chose vanilla extract; you can use whatever you'd like such as almond, orange, etc. Because you're not trying to mask the strong flavour of marshmallows here, you won't need to put a large amount of flavour in, you can make it a little subtle, handy if your cake is delicately flavoured.

The glycerin you see above is Wilton brand, \$3.49 for that very small 2 oz bottle. Crazy. An alternative source for Food Grade Glycerin is a health food store. Drug store glycerin, although labeled as a gargle, is not really considered "food grade".

Tools:

You can do all of this by hand. Well, except simmer the water, a stovetop helps there. But the rest can be done without any special tools. You *can* use a KitchenAid® stand mixer but it's not mandatory that you have one (you'll burn out a hand mixer though so that's a no go). It can all be mixed by hand without too much problem. You'll end with the kneading whether you mix by hand or machine, so really, which way you go is not a huge deal. Me, I'm just lazy.

A kitchen scale is handy but certainly not mandatory. You'll be adding "enough" sugar so as long as you have that much, you'll be fine. It isn't an exact recipe as far as this is concerned. 2 lbs of icing sugar is about 6 cups. Pre-sift 7 or 8 and do NOT expect to use it all.

A small pot and a small bowl that will sit above but not in some water in the pot. Other than this, your standard kitchen utensils and measuring doohickeys are all you need.

OK, let's make fondant already.

Oh, wait. I really should make note that while I was doing this demo and mixing up the fondant, I noticed that the weight of the sugar on the scale kept rising. I'd have it at exactly 908g, mess with the camera for few minutes, look again and it was now 912. Ghosts?!? No, just a very high humidity level today. And because the sugar was 'damper' than it should be I used a little more than the 908g of sugar. Just so you know, if you make this, DO NOT EVER DUMP ALL THE SUGAR IN AT ONE TIME! Go nice and slow; add a bit at a time until the fondant is "right". Most days it will be less than the whole 6 cups; damp days like today might need more.

OK, enough already, let's make the fondant!

Step One: Sift your sugar.

Yes, this is important. You do NOT want little gravel-like lumps of hard sugar bits in your fondant, it will make it gritty when trying to create a nice velvety smooth surface on your cake and give sandy mouth-feel to the person who bites it. Here I've sifted my weighed sugar into my KA bowl then put it back into the blue bowl once I'm done.



OK, that was Very Difficult Step One. On to Step Deux.

Step Two: Prepare your gelatin

Sprinkle your gelatin powder, whether a packaged one like this Knox or a tablespoon of powder from the bulk food section over the $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of cool water to soften; let it set 2 minutes. While that's getting all plump, put a small pot with about a half-inch of water to simmering (crank the burner up to max, once it just begins to boils, turn the heat down.)



Pop your small bowl over (not in) your lightly simmering water and let the gelatin melt. Turn off the heat and, keeping the bowl over the hot water, add your other ingredient.



Melt gelatin... add flavouring...



Add corn syrup... add glycerin. Stir until well blended.

End of step two. Do we need to take a break yet? No? OK, let's plow ahead. If you want to add your food colour now, you can do so. You can also add it a little later when it's mixing.

Step Three: Mix gelatin soup with sugar

Halfway there, step-wise. Hope no one is finding this actually "too hard" yet.

Small detour... So what has been the hardest part so far? Anyone? Anyone? Beuller? Yes, you in the blue shirt... That's right: shopping for the glycerin. And was it actually difficult? No. Now you have a better-sized bottle of it and you're ready to whip it out any time you need to make fondant in the future. No worse than going to the cake store to get piping gel or the post office to mail a cake.

What's that? You'd have to buy corn syrup and gelatin too? Yep. So next time you're checking out the horrid canned frostings and chuckling to yourself in the baking aisle at the grocery store, pick those up while stocking up on icing sugar and Crisco. Or make a detour to the bulk section to get a small supply of bulk gelatin powder and save a bit of moolah.

Right. Where were we? Step three...

Your warm gelatin soup can stay over the warm water for a sec; you now turn your attention to your nice fluffy sifted sugar. In a nice big bowl, you want to pour about half the sugar in, then make a well in the center. This will be where we might split off to the KitchenAid or do some hand mixing. If you go for hand mixing, grab a good sturdy wooden spoon. If you're going high tech, pop the bread dough hook onto your KA.

Now take your sugar with a well and pour the warm gelatin soup in there. Then take your spoon or spatula or whatever, and mix the sugar and soup together. It *will* be runny.



Remember that we used half the sugar (about 3 cups or 450g) in one go. Now we're going to add one more cup and stir into our soft mixture. After that, we're cutting down to a half cup at a time until it's too annoying to mix by hand (for the KA). For hand mixers, you need to go a bit further until it's getting a bit too stiff to stir. (You could add food colour here as well)

KA people: set the dough hook a'spinnin at med to low speed. You're not whipping cream here, just mixing stuff up. Add a bit more sugar a **half** cup at a time now. Keep stopping and scraping down the sides of the bowl. Eventually, in a couple more minutes, you'll note that the mixture is getting quite stiff and at some point after the "magical" amount of sugar is added, it will be only slightly sticky, no longer wet. Woo-hoo, your KA work is pretty much done.



Hand mixing people, you'll go a bit further than where we left off, but you'll stop when your sugar is a bit wet and somewhat sticky but can be made into a soft if somewhat droopy ball. From this point on, both methods are the same and known around the world as "Step Four".

Step Four: Getting kneady

Once your KA bowl is full of barely sticky mix OR your hand mixed bowl if full of just slightly stickier mix, it's time to dump it all. Take your sieve (which you used to sift the sugar) and sprinkle a fine dusting of sugar on your countertop. Then cajole, pry or spoon out the contents of your bowl onto this light coating of powder. Now grease up. Actually, you need just a very slight amount of Crisco on your hands; you're not in a greased pig competition here. You're merely keeping the sugary mess from sticking. So **LIGHTLY** cover your hands with a **TOUCH** of Crisco. Ok, roll up your sleeves and let's get pushy.



You'll now knead your mound of sugar goo, making sure to often sprinkle both the counter and the top of the lump with sugar to prevent the whole glop sticking to the counter. A pastry scraper is a great gadget to pull out of the drawer here. If you don't own one, grab the egg spatula. If you do this right and sprinkle your sugar consistently, you may not need to even scrape. As you add more sugar and knead it in, the ball will eventually become rather easy to handle and hardly feel

sticky. Now don't go overboard and add TOO much, you don't want to get too stiff, it's a pain to go backwards. It should be somewhat soft but no longer sticky.

HINT: If you don't know for sure what good fondant consistency should be, you can buy a small box of commercial fondant and play with that before hand to get familiar with typical fondant stiffness. *(Thanks to choc-a-holic for that great tip.)*

And here we are with a nice ball of home-made scratch fondant, all mixed up and ready to either wrap well (double plastic wrap then into a zip bag with all the air sucked out) and pop in the refrigerator to 'set' for 24 hours OR use it right away, like some decorators do. Try it both ways and see if you find one works better than the other. You could chop this ball in two, use one half now and 'set' the other – just make sure to let it warm up and knead a little before using.



Step Five: THERE IS NO STEP FIVE.

You're done, you have a fondant ball and, depending on whether you'll set or use right away, you can now work with your fondant.

You can do any of the following:

Cut up your ball and colour bits of it different colours by kneading the food colouring in (I'd recommend maybe donning disposable gloves if you're going to add a LOT of colour).

Add gum powder of some sort (Wilton Gum Tex or if you can find it, Tylose or gum tragacanth) and make gumpaste for flowers and decorations.

Mix two different shades of fondant (one strong, one pale) and knead them together slightly to create a marbled fondant.

There are more things you can do but this is a scratch tutorial, not a fondant tutorial so I'll leave you to hunting for things to do with it.

STORING:

Wrapped securely in two layers of plastic wrap and then a zippered plastic bag, this will keep in your refrigerator for 30 days or in the freezer for 3 months.

ROLLING:

As with most fondant destined to go on a cake, you'll want to aim for about ¼" thickness.

DARK COLOURS:

If you're aiming for black or dark brown, you can add cocoa powder early in the process to get a chocolate base. Include this in that first half-batch of sugar you then add your gelatin soup to so that you aren't mussing up the moisture/dryness level later on. With a dark base, going to solid black uses a whole lot less food colour.

CONCLUSION

So there you go, you now see how simple it is to make Scratch Fondant. If you've made MMF before, you'll see it's no more difficult; all the steps are pretty much exactly the same. The upside is the flavour is much nicer; you aren't fighting against a strong "marshmallow" taste and need to add lots of flavouring to hide it. It's also less sweet so more people will enjoy it. The texture, you'll notice, is less "rubbery" than MMF and has less tendency to shrink. And cost wise, it's actually about 80 cents cheaper to make than MMF. And try this: save a bit of MMF and a bit of Scratch and do a blind taste test with your friends and family, see which one they like better.

Is it a 100% perfect substitute for *all* commercial fondants? No, some of those are actually VERY nice. (Not Wilton's – it's horrid!!) But if you find yourself out of fondant at 2 a.m. with a customer coming in six hours to pick up their cake (or fondant-covered cookies), this could be a great lifesaver.

Finally, I'll just add: Give it a try! Even if you end up thinking it's not all that (and a bag o' chips) at least you'll have given it a shot and can discuss it's pros and cons from experience.

Happy Scratching!

Paul

