



If you have a passion for creating art and enjoy being in the kitchen, then food decorating may be for you! Borders and decorations! Shapes and layers! Colors and fillings! The possibilities with food decorating are endless and you are the artist! People who decorate food have the opportunity to experiment, taste, express their artistic side, and learn new techniques, ensuring that their job will never be boring. Be a part of special occasions as you create beautiful masterpieces combining your talent with your ability to honor the wishes and vision of the person who is requesting the treat.



Exploring 4-H Visual Arts - Food Decorating

Spark Activity: Artistic Accents

Adding chocolate accents and/or berries is a tasty way to decorate your cakes.

Frost your cake and add a simple border to the bottom or any designs you wish to the top. Be sure to leave room for the chocolate and/or berry accents on top.

To make chocolate curls, use a vegetable peeler to peel large strips from a large chocolate candy bar. No matter how you arrange them, they turn out looking great.

Berries can add a pop of color to your cake. Experiment with different types of fresh berries or other fruits to add elements of art and principles of design to your cake.



4-H Project Levels and Goals

Beginner

- Bake and frost a single-layer cake that will be good for decorating
- Prepare icing that is the proper consistency for borders, drop flowers, and lettering
- Develop a skill in using professional cake decorating equipment - experiment with different decorating tips
- Bake and decorate cakes for special occasions combining color, design, and flavors in a pleasing way

Intermediate

- Bake and frost two-layer cakes that will be good decorating bases and have jam, pudding, or other filling
- Prepare royal icing for decorating
- Develop intermediate skills in cake decorating - combination borders, lettering, flat surface flowers and flowers made on a nail, leaves and special effects like Cornelli lace, lattice work, and basket-weave
- Learn to cut a cake for serving
- Bake and decorate cakes for special occasions
- Compare the cost of home-decorated cakes with bakery cakes

Advanced

- Bake, frost, assemble, and decorate stacked tiered cakes
- Develop advanced skills in cake decorating such as borders, lettering, flowers using the flat nail or the lily nail, and special effects
- Experiment with gum paste, color and shape marzipan for decorations, make pulled sugar decorations, and rolled fondant
- Explore cake painting, air brushing, and use of powders
- Create 3D designs and explore the use of unconventional shapes

Put Your Project Into Action

Show Your Skills

- Create a scrapbook of cakes you've decorated
- A portfolio that compares the cost of making and decorating cakes at home with the cost of buying one or hiring someone
- A marketing plan for a cake decorating business you would like to open

Service and Leadership

- Make decorated cookies or cupcakes for local businesses as a thank you for their service
- Host a cake walk fundraiser and use proceeds to fund a local service learning project
- Donate decorated cakes to a community organization fundraiser or silent auction
- Create birthday bags for a local food pantry
- Hold a cake decorating workshop or cupcake competition for your local club or county 4-H program
- Host a community class on cake decorating

Entrepreneurship

- Bake and decorate birthday treats for friends and family for a small fee
- Create a portfolio of your best work to market your products to others

Technology Connection

- Cake-decorating machine
- Cricut / Silhouette cut gum paste decorations
- Camera Lucida projector for drawing designs
- Edible inks
- 3D food printing

Connecting with a Mentor

- Local college with a culinary department
- Local bakery, or grocery store with a bakery
- A restaurant in your area that specializes in specialty desserts

Events

- 4-H workshops / SPIN clubs
- County and State Fair exhibit classes
- Check local craft stores for available food decorating classes
- Check local colleges for summer classes available to community members



Careers Related to Food Decorating

Food Stylist	Baker
Research & Development Chef	Food Scientist
Cake Designer	Food Microbiologist
Chocolatier	Business Management
Pastry Chef	Fine Arts

Start a Conversation

What is your favorite part about decorating cakes?
Can you predict what you might do/see/hear/feel/smell/taste during activities related to food decorating?
What do you think will make this a good project/activity?
What problems or issues might you face with food decorating?
How do you think you will make your food decorating decisions? What steps might you take?
What kind of skills do you think you might learn through food decorating? Problem solving? Perseverance? Decision Making? Practice and time management? How will these life skills be important to you?

Want to learn more?

go.illinois.edu/4Hfooddecorating

Explore more at Illinois 4-H!
4-H.extension.illinois.edu



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Credits: University of Wyoming Extension 4-H project manual | University of Wyoming Extension 4-H project sheet | University of California 4-H project sheet | New Mexico State University Extension 4-H project sheets | 4-H Spark Sheets are a collaborative effort of 4-H staff, volunteers, alumni, and teens from across Illinois. A big thanks to the many contributors and reviewers!