Speckled Egg Layer Cake

Buttery coconut cake and creamy vanilla frosting get dressed up to look like speckled egg candies, complete with an adorable coconut nest. This Speckled Egg Layer Cake is perfect for your Easter table.

Serves 12-16

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Ingredients

Coconut Cake:
3 ½ cups all-purpose flour
4 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1 ¼ cups sweetened shredded coconut, toasted
1 ½ cups coconut cream (from a 15 ounce can)
½ cup vegetable oil
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
2 sticks unsalted butter, room temperature
2 2/3 cups sugar
4 whole eggs plus 4 whites

Directions

Preheat oven to 350°F. Line the bottoms of two round 9-inch baking pans with a circle of parchment paper, then grease pans.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, salt and shredded coconut. In a small bowl, whisk together the coconut cream, oil and vanilla. Set both aside.

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Ingredients Continued…

Vanilla Buttercream:
4 sticks unsalted butter, room temperature
9 cups powdered sugar
¼ cup coconut cream
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
½ teaspoon kosher salt
2 to 3 drops blue liquid gel food coloring
1 drop green liquid gel food coloring

Speckling liquid:
1 teaspoon cocoa powder
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon water

½ cup sweetened shredded coconut, toasted
Speckled chocolate egg candies

Directions Continued…

In the bowl of an electric mixer with the paddle attachment, cream butter and sugar together on medium speed for 2 to 3 minutes, until fluffy and much lighter in color. Add the eggs one at a time, mixing well between additions, until blended. Add half of the dry ingredients, then half of the liquid ingredients, mixing between additions, just until absorbed. Repeat with remaining dry and wet ingredients. Divide batter between prepared baking pans and smooth tops. Bake for 50 to 55 minutes, until golden brown on top and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out with a few crumbs attached. Place pans on a cooling rack and cool 30 minutes. Remove from pans and cool completely. (Cakes can be made a day ahead, wrapped tightly in plastic wrap, and stored at room temperature.)

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In the bowl of an electric mixer with the paddle attachment, beat butter on medium speed for 1 to 2 minutes, until light and fluffy. Add powdered sugar, one cup at a time, until fully absorbed. Add coconut cream, vanilla, and salt; mix on low speed until combined. Increase speed to medium and mix for 1 to 2 minutes more, until fluffy and lighter in color. Mix in food coloring on low speed until combined. Scrape the bowl with a rubber spatula and mix again to ensure the color is distributed completely.

Use a serrated knife to slice off any mounded top of the cake to create a mostly flat surface. Flip each layer upside down, so that the bottom is now the top. Place one layer on a 9 inch cake board, and the other layer on a piece of parchment. Use a metal offset spatula to spread a few tablespoons of the buttercream on the top and sides of both layers, pressing the buttercream in, to create a crumb coat. Transfer both layers to the freezer for 30 minutes to harden the buttercream. (This step helps to create smoother, cleaner edges when doing a final coat of buttercream.)

Remove cakes from the freezer. Spread 1 cup buttercream evenly on the surface of the bottom layer. Top with second layer and frost entire outside of cake.

In a small bowl, whisk together the cocoa powder, vanilla and water until no lumps remain. Dip a pastry brush in the liquid and use your fingers to flick the bristles at the cake and create a speckled effect. Repeat all over cake.

Mound ¼ cup of the coconut on the top of the cake, then nestle a few egg candies in the middle. Press coconut and egg candies around the bottom edge of the cake.