

Valentine Roses

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For an elegant Valentine's Day celebration, try silver and gold roses atop a cake that looks like velvet. The coloring technique on the cake is super easy and can be adapted for any number of occasions. The roses are made from modeling chocolate, so they're as delicious as they are lovely. Not only is modeling chocolate easy to work with, it takes petal dust and luster dust beautifully, so the coloring possibilities are endless. In addition, the flowers you make are wireless, so they're completely edible.

I have formulated my own rolled fondant and modeling chocolate for optimal flavor and workability. They're available for sale on my website, but you should feel free to use whatever products you're comfortable using to reproduce this project.

For the cake:

1. Cover your filled, iced cake with dark pink rolled fondant and let it rest long enough to form a skin.

2. Using a damp, clean sea sponge and three or four successively darker shades of red

petal dust diluted in vodka, grain alcohol, or lemon extract, sponge paint all over the cake. Make the darker shades more dilute so that your final product doesn't wind up too dark.



3. Optional, but very effective: Once the surface has dried thoroughly, work a small amount of pearl dust into a cotton ball, and use it to polish the cake. Use a clean cotton ball to buff. Work on a small

section at a time, and change cotton balls often – sugar build-up in the cotton ball can form hard lumps that will scratch your cake surface.

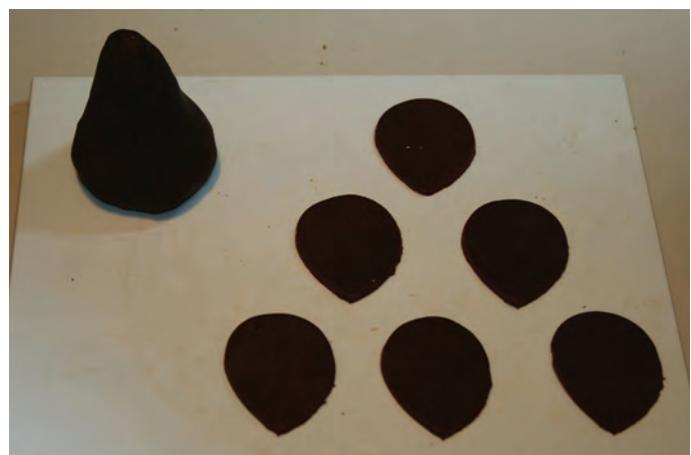
4. Set the cake aside and make your roses.

For the roses:

1. I chose dark modeling chocolate for this cake because I really like the effect of pearl dust on dark chocolate. It makes for a very pretty silver that I've yet to be able to match using silver luster dust. For more realistic roses, white modeling chocolate is tremendously effective as it catches the light in a way that makes your flowers glow if you have a light touch with added coloring.

2. Prepare your dark modeling chocolate for use by kneading and warming with your hands. If your room is particularly chilly, you might find a few seconds in the microwave to be a big help.

3. Roll out your modeling chocolate to a thickness of about $\frac{1}{16}$ ". Cut six petals using a medium-sized rose petal cutter. Form a rose base by making a teardrop-shaped mound about twice as tall as the height of your cutter.





4. Place a petal on a rose petal veiner or multi-purpose petal veiner and press to add vein texture. The petal will increase slightly in size when you press it.

5. Place the petal between two sheets of plastic wrap and use your finger as you would a ball tool for gum paste to thin the edges.



6. Transfer the petal to a paper towel, and using a soft brush, apply pearl dust starting at the outside edge and brushing toward the center of the petal. Be sparing – use enough to gain the desired effect, but don't try to paint the entire petal with a solid layer. The variation in color in the finished rose petals is quite striking.



7. Attach the petal to the conical base so that about half the petal sticks up above the top of the base (the top of the petal is the round part, not the pointed part). If your petal has gotten too cool and firm to stick by itself, you can hold it between your fingers or in your palm for a few seconds to rewarm it so it will adhere to the base. Alternately, you can brush on a small amount of gum glue.



8. Curl one edge of the petal in to the center, then curl the other edge of the petal in to wrap around the initial curl. Concentrate on the top of the petal when you're doing this – you want the hole in the top to be very small. Don't worry about what the bottom of the petal is doing – if the top is right, the bottom will take care of itself.



9. The next row of petals consists of two petals. Prepare each one as above (vein, thin edges, and dust with color).



the final product

10. Attach the first of the two petals to the base so that the top of the petal lines up with the top of the petal that forms the center wrap. Press one side of the new petal down to adhere to the base and leave the other side sticking out for the moment.



11. Attach the second petal in the same manner directly across from the first. Press down the same side of the petal so that the sides that remain sticking out form wings.

12. Wrap the wings down so that each one covers the leading edge of its neighbor petal. Curl the outside edge of each petal very slightly back on itself, as if it's starting to open away from the center.



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13. Apply the next row of three petals in the same manner. Prepare them by veining, thinning, and dusting. Attach to the base with one side pressed down and one side hanging open. The petals should be equally spaced around the base. Press down the “wings” then adjust by curling the outside edges back on themselves.



14. Optional: you may do an additional row consisting of five petals. For this project, I found that those roses were awfully large, so I opted to stop after the three petal row. You may also make some rose buds, which are formed the same way except that you stop after the two petal row.

15. After the newly-formed rose has rested a bit to firm up, cut it off the base by cutting at an angle with a paring knife. A straight cut will position the rose on your cake so that it’s facing the ceiling. Cutting at an angle allows its beauty to shine.

16. Make several leaves from the same modeling chocolate using a leaf cutter and veiner. For this project, I’ve dusted them with gold luster to set off the silver roses.



Finishing and assembly:

1. Roll a long strip of modeling chocolate and cut it for a base border. For this project, I’ve used a straight cutter for the bottom edge and an embellished border cutter for the top edge. Dust with gold luster or whatever color you feel is appropriate.



2. Apply your border using a little water or gum glue at the base of your cake.



3. Use a little melted chocolate to apply your roses in a cluster to your cake. Use a little more melted chocolate to add leaves for accents. 🍷

