

GENERATIONS OF CAKE RECIPES, *passed down to you*

RECIPES AND PHOTOS REPRINTED, WITH PERMISSION, FROM *GRANDBABY CAKES* BY JOCELYN DELK ADAMS (AGATE SURREY, 2015)

With a love for baking in her heart and a lineage of bakers in her family, food blogger Jocelyn Delk Adams has written her first cookbook, filled with delicious cakes, beautiful photography, and sweet memories. Jocelyn shares vintage classics, modern twists, and old-fashioned favorites that remind us it's hard to beat the joy and delight of a homemade cake.

When did you start baking?

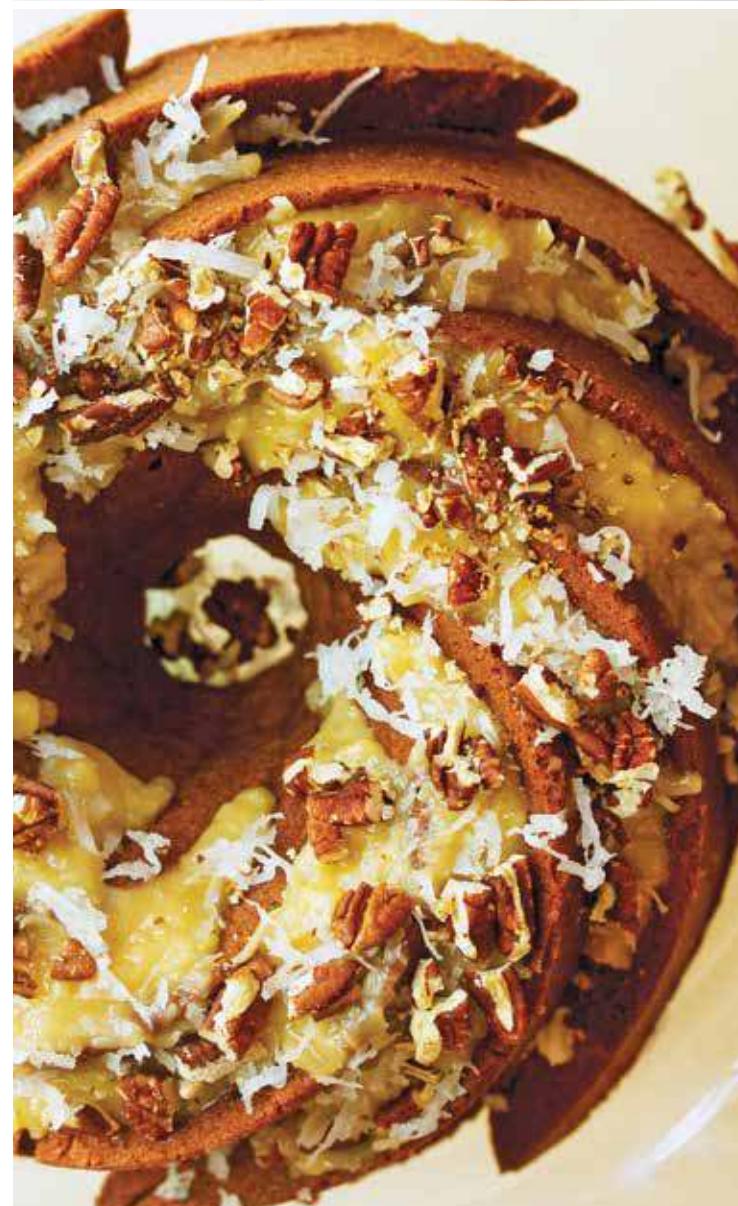
I began baking when I was really young—about 5 years old. I was in charge of simple things like sifting flour and babysitting the stand mixer. My tasks grew as I got older, and my grandmother, who we call “Big Mama,” my mother, and my aunt taught me family recipes and really took me under their wings in the kitchen.

Tell us about your cooking style.

I don't like to manipulate or alter ingredients too much from their natural state. I try to enhance and highlight the best qualities of each fruit or vegetable or item on the plate. I try to respond to what I think tastes good and makes sense. Sometimes it's intuitive, but it often takes a trial-and-error process.

What led you to start your blog?

I started writing my blog *Grandbaby Cakes* to document the fun things I was making in the kitchen. I had been taking pictures and posting them on social media, and a friend told me I should start a blog. It has grown from there. While I have baked since I was young, it never occurred to me that it would become my career—but when I started writing about my grandmother and my family's love of baking, it just felt right.



Where did you find inspiration for the recipes in your cookbook?

The majority of the recipes are cakes I grew up eating—cakes my Big Mama would make when we'd visit her in Winona, Mississippi. The recipes are Southern-inspired, though I've given some of them modern twists. But these are cakes that have been passed down through my family, and many have connections to different family members and memories.

Tell us more about your grandmother's cakes.

We used to travel from Chicago to visit my grandparents in Mississippi a few times a year for holidays and family reunions. Big Mama would have at least three cakes waiting on us—usually a sour cream pound cake, a caramel cake, and a coconut cake. It was always a slower pace there, and the visits gave me a chance to relax, spend time with family, and bake with Big Mama. Now when we visit for Thanksgiving, I'm the one expected to make the cakes!

Why did you include baking rules in your cookbook?

My baking rules are from first-hand experience. I've found many things that work and many things that don't, and I'm glad I get to share that with readers. I also want people to realize that they don't need to be intimidated by baking. Sure, baking is a science, and there are some hard and fast rules, but some of the techniques you see these days aren't necessary. I think it's important to continue the traditions of old-fashioned baking—the flavor combinations, even the nostalgic appearance of homemade cakes. There's something special about them because they are made with love.

Which tip is most important?

There are two: first, have fun! Think of baking as a rewarding process. Being in the kitchen is a relaxing experience for me, especially when it's been a collaborative process with family. Second, make sure you read the recipe before starting. I have begun a recipe that I planned on whipping up in an hour or so, and realized I had to let the mix rest overnight.

How did you decide which stories and pictures to include?

Some were memories related to specific cakes or flavors—there's the Fig-Brown Sugar Cake that ties back to my grandmother's fig tree, and Mama's 7Up Pound Cake that is my mother's absolute favorite. Others are included because certain flavor profiles remind me of certain people and events. I think the past inspires us so much. While we can't always pinpoint the moment we decided to go down a path, or the different family members pushed us along in our journey, these are pieces of these memories and subconscious! So for me, *Grandbaby Cakes* is an ode to me.

CLASSIC YELLOW CAKE WITH WHIPPED CHOCOLATE FROSTING

Yield: 1 (9-inch) 3-layer cake

Recipe from *Grandbaby Cakes* by Jocelyn Delk Adams (Agate Surrey, 2015)

While there are tons of recipes for yellow cake with chocolate frosting, this one brings home that nostalgic flavor you remember that only baking from scratch can give.

Cake:

- 1 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 2½ cups sugar
- 7 large eggs
- 3 cups sifted cake flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 1 cup sour cream
- ⅓ cup vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract

Frosting:

- ¾ cup unsalted butter, softened
- 5 cups confectioners' sugar
- 1 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- Pinch of salt
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream, chilled
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract

1. For cake: Preheat oven to 325°. Spray 3 (9-inch) cake pans with nonstick baking spray with flour. Line bottoms of pans with parchment paper; spray again. Set aside.
2. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat butter at high speed 2 minutes. Gradually add sugar; beat until pale yellow and fluffy, 5 minutes more. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition, stopping to scrape sides of bowl.
3. Reduce mixer speed to low; gradually add flour. Add salt, baking powder, and baking soda. Beat in sour cream, oil, and vanilla just until combined. (Be careful not to overbeat.) Divide batter among prepared pans.
4. Bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean (but just barely!), 27 to 32 minutes. (Do not overbake.) Let cool in pans 10 minutes; remove from pans, and let cool to room temperature on wire racks. (Loosely cover with plastic wrap so layers do not dry out.)
5. For frosting: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat butter at high speed 2 minutes. Reduce mixer speed to low; gradually add confectioners' sugar, cocoa, and salt. Beat until combined and crumbly. Increase speed to high; add cream and vanilla. Beat until fluffy and smooth.
6. On a serving plate, place 1 cake layer. Spread one-fourth of frosting over top of layer. Top with another layer; spread with one-fourth of frosting. Top with remaining cake layer, bottom side up; spread remaining frosting over top and sides of cake.



S'MORES LAVA CAKES

Yield: 4 servings

Recipe adapted from *Grandbaby Cakes* by Jocelyn Delk Adams (Agate Surrey, 2015)

These are best eaten right out of the oven while they are still warm and gooey.

- ½ cup unsalted butter, divided
- ½ cup graham cracker crumbs
- 1½ teaspoons sugar
- 16 large marshmallows, divided
- 3 ounces bittersweet chocolate, roughly chopped
- ¾ cup confectioners' sugar
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour, sifted
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 large eggs
- 1 large egg yolk
- 1½ teaspoons vanilla extract

1. Spray 4 (6-ounce) ramekins with nonstick baking spray with flour. Set aside.
2. In a small skillet, melt 2 tablespoons butter over medium heat. Stir in graham cracker crumbs and sugar; cook, stirring occasionally, until golden brown, 2 to 3 minutes. Set aside.
3. Preheat broiler 5 minutes. Line a baking sheet with aluminum foil;

spray with nonstick cooking spray.

Place marshmallows on prepared pan.

4. Broil marshmallows until toasted but not burned, watching carefully. Set aside. Preheat oven to 400°.

5. In a medium microwave-safe bowl, microwave chocolate and remaining 6 tablespoons butter in 20-second intervals, stirring occasionally, until melted and smooth. Whisk in confectioners' sugar, flour, and salt until batter is thick. (Batter will become difficult to whisk.) Whisk in eggs, egg yolk, and vanilla until smooth. Pour batter into prepared ramekins, filling halfway full (reserve remaining batter).

6. Gently press 2 toasted marshmallows into center of batter in each ramekin. Sprinkle ½ cup graham cracker crumbs over marshmallows. Spoon remaining batter into ramekins, filling three-fourths full. (Marshmallows and graham cracker crumbs should be completely covered with batter.)

7. Bake 10 to 12 minutes. Let cool 2 minutes; run a knife along the inside of each ramekin to help release cakes. Carefully invert onto plates. Top cakes with remaining marshmallows; sprinkle with remaining graham cracker crumbs.

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