

# Fall Leaf Cake Pops

By Jennifer Cucci

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A Tutorial by Jennifer Cucci

possibly go wrong. The individually portioned balls of yumminess are simple enough to make by most home bakers, yet can be designed with the most intricate of details and considered a true form of decorating art. They are, in fact, so easy to work with that many artists incorporate popular decorating techniques and mediums using items such as molds, royal icing, SugarVeil and other popular decorating forms creating true and complicated works of art. So much so, that they were featured as their own category at the renowned Oklahoma State Sugar Art Show and have been featured on numerous baking channels. The two extreme ends of the baking world are at somewhat of a tug of war over the treat and somewhere in the middle of that home baker and amazing decorating artist lies the true beauty of the pop, its reachability.

Maybe you were one of those people who did not believe cake pops would survive the craze; maybe you were one of the original enthusiasts who embraced the new kid on the baking block. Regardless, you are left with a new category in our industry that has expanded its original scope and crossed continents, becoming popular in many countries outside the U.S. So, whether you are using cakes scraps or have a whole sheet to dedicate, get some cake, embrace the change and challenge yourself to make great things!

### *The Cake Pop Culture*

They are just a fad, they won't last long! I refuse to make them. Adorable, cute and amazingly delicious. Cake Pops! Just the term alone elicits so many mixed emotions. Obviously, I love them, but just a few years ago, you were hard pressed to find them in any bakery, let alone grocery store chains or coffee shops. First made popular by the beloved blogger Bakerella, cake pops, in one form or another, are becoming more and more mainstream as the years go on, proving that they are not just a fad and that the "Pop Culture" is here to stay.

Stick or no stick, themed or just flavored, in one form or another, the circular treat is pretty easy to find nowadays. Regardless of presentation, at the end of the day, it's cake rolled into a ball, coated in chocolate and can be decorated with your favorite topping -how could you

For this article I wanted to concentrate on using a medium that you don't necessarily come across when you think of Cake Pops. I wanted to do this for a few reasons; first of all, it's fun but, more importantly, with this tutorial I wanted to demonstrate how you can truly incorporate popular cake decorating styles and techniques into our cake pop world.



All cake pops start off with a baked cake. This can be store bought or your best recipe. Next, you are going to crumble it down and knead those crumbs into a "Play-doh" like consistency. I always use my food processor to do this, but a mixer works just as well. It is much faster and you will get more consistent results. It is a really simple process and takes about 1 minute. You will see it first break down into fine crumbs, then they start to stick to each other and form a bit bigger of a crumb and, finally, if you leave it in long enough it will turn into a big ball of dough all by itself. If you like, you can still add frosting or any other additives you are accustomed to using. You will just need a lot less of them as you are using them primarily for flavoring and not as a binding agent.

Once you have made your cake dough, the next step in creating these fall leaf cake pops is to roll the cake balls. You can, of course, roll them by hand one at a time and even use popular tools for somewhat consistent measuring such as an ice cream scoop or a traditional meat baller, but my personal favorite tool of course is my Easy Roller or our newly announced Mini Easy Roller, giving you the choice to roll 9 or 21 balls at a time, all the same size, shape and weight.



## Now for the fun part... decorating!



To make these fall leaf themed cake pops I used, you will need royal icing. Royal icing is a great medium that I think most cake decorators are familiar with using. There is so much you can do with it and it is super easy to make. I bet you have everything in your kitchen already. Just take an egg white (or if you prefer, meringue powder works just as well) whisk it up a bit and then add powder sugar till it forms stiff peaks. You can also flavor it as you wish; just make sure the flavoring is not oil based or it won't set up well.

For this theme, you are going to search for fall leaf coloring pages online or you can hand draw one, if you are so inclined. Make sure the image has plenty of veins - ideally veins that run from the bottom of the leaf stem to the very tip and outside of the leaf. You can always add more during the piping stage to create more sturdiness. Make sure the image is about an inch and a half in diameter (you can always shrink it down if you need to).



Cut out the image and tape it to your work surface, laying a piece of wax paper over the top. You want to lightly coat the wax paper with Crisco or another white fat so that your piped leaf releases from the wax paper when dry.



Add your newly created royal icing to a piping bag and fit it with a 1.5 tip. Now channel your inner child and start tracing. Your lines, the "leaf veins", should all be connected; I find it easier if I start from the bottom and work my way to the outside.

Once outlined, carefully move the leaf to a flower former to dry (we used the insert of our Easy Roller), but any former will work.



Once the newly piped image was dry, I airbrushed them in fall colors, but you can easily just add color to your royal icing to make the different colors if you do not have an airbrush.

This step is kind of a personal preference so use your artistic license for coloring. Once airbrushed, allow them to sit overnight to dry before gently removing the wax paper.

# Dipping & Decorating



Take your rolled cake balls and start by dipping the cake pop stick into your candy melts and then into the cake rounds. This quick step helps seal the cake to the stick. Next, dip the entire pop into the candy melts. Tap off the excess and place in a cake pop stand or Styrofoam to let dry.



Once the cake pop is about dry, but still a little tacky, place the dry leaf on the top of the cake pop. You don't want it to sink too deep into the chocolate. The slightly wet chocolate coating will act as a glue once dry and will keep the leaf firmly on top.



For an extra "pop" and fall shimmer, you can add bronze pearl dust to the milk chocolate coating and this will create a neat sparkle effect for your cake pops and allow them to stand out a bit more. Just dry dust it on.

*I hope you enjoyed this tutorial as much as I enjoyed making these fall leaf cake pops. I also hope it will inspire you to think of decorating cake pops in new and different ways!*



Jennifer is the developer of the popular cake pop tool the Easy Roller.

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