

A Delicious Way to Celebrate Independence Day

By Susie Iventosch



This Coconut Flag Cake is sure to be a hit on the Fourth of July. Photo Susie Iventosch

My first order of business is to apologize for omitting the sugar in last week's apricot scone recipe! A reader notified me of the omission, but also said that she tried the recipe without sugar, and it was great, but she thought it would be even "greater" with a little bit of sugar. So, if you feel the same way, please add 1/4 cup granulated sugar to the dries before cutting in the butter!

With July 4th coming up this Friday, I think you will still have time to make this delicious cake for your festivities! Since most people have a "love" or "hate" relationship with coconut, I've used sweetened coconut cream for the flavor rather than flaked coconut. But, if you and yours love coconut, then you could certainly put flaked coconut on the frosting in the white stripes. This would make the white stripes stand out even more and give you the coconut texture as well as flavor!

Happy Birthday, America!!!

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COCONUT FLAG CAKE with Cream Cheese Frosting, Raspberries & Blueberries

Cake

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup unsalted butter (2 sticks)
- 1 and 3/4 cups granulated sugar
- 4 eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 cup canned or bottled, sweetened cream of coconut (such as you'd use for pina colodas – can be found near cocktail mixers in the alcohol section of the store ... Coco Lopez or Coco Real both work well)
- 1 cup buttermilk (or milk with 1 teaspoon cider vinegar added)
- 2 and 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spray a 10x15 jelly roll tin with cooking spray or line bottom of pan with parchment paper.

Sift together flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt and set aside.

In a large bowl, cream together butter and sugar until light and fluffy with an electric mixer. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each. Stir in vanilla and coconut cream.

On slow speed, beat in sifted dries alternately with buttermilk, beginning and ending with dries.

Pour batter into prepared 10x15 jelly roll tin.

Bake at 350 degrees for approximately 25 minutes, or until cake tester comes out clean. Cool cake, then wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate until ready to frost.

Cream Cheese Frosting

INGREDIENTS

- 1 8-ounce package cream cheese at room temp
- 1/2 stick (4 tablespoons) butter, softened to room temp
- 1/4 cup sweetened cream of coconut
- 1/4 cup milk (may not need all of this)
- 4 cups powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

DIRECTIONS

In a large bowl, beat butter and cream cheese together with electric mixer until well blended. Add cream of coconut and vanilla. Add powdered sugar, 1 cup at a time, and beat until well mixed and fluffy. Add milk as needed to obtain good spreading consistency. If you go overboard on the milk, just add a little more powdered sugar! Spread over cooled cake and allow to sit for 5-10 minutes before decorating with berries.

Garnish

- 2 pints raspberries
- 1 pint blueberries

Rinse berries and thoroughly dry on paper towels.

Once frosting on cake is set, arrange blueberries in the upper left corner of the cake to make the stars. Make 7 rows of raspberries for the stripes, with the frosting in between the rows for the white stripes.

Refrigerate until ready to serve.



Susie Iventosch is the author of Tax Bites and Tasty Morsels, which can be found at Across the Way in Moraga, www.amazon.com, and www.taxbites.net. Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com. **This recipe can be found on our website:** www.lamorindaweekly.com. If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977.

Family Focus

Getting Your Children to Listen and Cooperate, Part I

By Margie Ryerson, MFT

There's an old Far Side cartoon by Gary Larson that shows a man giving verbal commands to his dog. The next panel shows what the dog actually hears: "Blah blah Ginger, blah blah Ginger . . ."

Sometimes parents set up a situation where our children are the ones who hear "blah, blah, blah." Then we may wonder why our children fail to listen and cooperate.

Our community is highly educated and articulate. Parents typically have an excellent command of language. I see many parents, out of perceived necessity or sometimes pure frustration, offering excessive explanations and lectures to their children.

We want our children to understand not only what we are saying but why we are saying it. We want them to develop respect, cooperation, self-discipline, self-awareness, generosity, compassion, and so many other val-

ues and attributes. In addition, we want them to be motivated in school, sports, music, and other pursuits. We have so much to impart to them, and understandably we want to instill as much as we possibly can.

But even the best and brightest children can only tune into us for a limited amount of time. Therefore, it is important to choose our words carefully and sparingly when we are instructing or disciplining our children.

In addition, we all stay focused a lot more easily on positive or interesting messages than on negative or repetitive ones. The challenge for parents is to give short, to-the-point, positive messages that our children can easily absorb.

For example, if your son got a D on an exam and you know he didn't study well for it, you could say, "That's too bad, Bryan. You've done

well in algebra up to now. Hopefully, the next test will be better."

Lecturing him on his failure to study enough or worrying aloud how this might mean a lower semester grade is not productive. Or in dog-speak, rubbing his nose in it doesn't help. By the time your child is in sixth or seventh grade he knows if he didn't study enough and what the implications are when he gets a low grade. Pointing out the obvious to your child will tend to produce anger and resentment – not a great recipe for turning around his lack of effort.

An example of a short, disciplinary message for a child who failed to feed the family dog two days in a row would be, "I'm upset that Coco had to go without food for so long because you didn't feed her. Does it bother you when she is very hungry? You're usually so caring and I know you love her. Please be sure to feed

her every morning, OK?" And then get confirmation from your child that she will comply.

Since we may not have our thoughts well-organized if we are talking spontaneously, we need to plan out what we want to say and how to say it. Of course, this is impossible to do all of the time, but we can tell older children that we need time to think about what they just said or did or didn't do. They'll pay more attention if they have to wait for your response, and you will have time to figure out an appropriate message.

It also helps to have your child occasionally repeat back to you what he heard you say, just to check for reception and accuracy. Occasionally ask him what went wrong or what he's thinking or feeling. A child will be more willing to share his thoughts and feelings with you if he thinks you will listen in a positive way and not

lecture him.

In a future Family Focus column, we will look at the importance of using action rather than words to encourage your kids to listen and cooperate.



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