



## **Module 8 - Section 2 - Ganaching the tiers**

**Objective:** Produce a neat, level, and smooth ganache cake.

**In completing each section the user will be able to:**

- Prepare the cake on a cake drum
- Ganache using the cake using the 'Crown Method' to achieve straight sides
- Achieve a flat, level, ganached top on each tier
- Achieve a smooth finish with a sharp edge on each tier
- Refine the finish using a pastry brush

**Assessment Criteria:**

1. Ensure that good food health and hygiene routines are practiced
2. State the details of the ganaching process
3. Explain why a tiered wedding cake must be placed on a cake drum
4. Achieve a smooth finish with a sharp edge
5. Produce a flat, level, ganached top

**You will need the following to complete the remaining lessons of Module 8:**

### **TOOLS**

#### **Knives**

- Palette knife
- Serrated knife
- Small sharp knife

#### **Caker's' tools**

- Scales
- Metal scraper
- Metal ruler
- Large rolling pin
- Cake smoothers
- Flexi smoothers
- PME Tool set

#### **Cutters**

- Large rose petal (8cm x 7cm)
- Peony cutter set - Culpitt (medium 5cm x 6.5cm, small 5.5cm x 4cm)
- Peony leaf (used for centre) (6cm x 2cm)
- Peony leaf (9cm x 4cm)

- Primrose (4cm x 4cm)

### **Veiners**

- 1 x Rose leaf - Sunflower Sugar Art
- 1 x Cattleya orchid throat - Petal Crafts
- 1 x FMM multi-purpose veiner

### **Brushes**

- Pastry brush
- Large flat dusting brush
- Make-up dusting brush

### **Kitchen equipment**

- Paper towel
- Tissue paper
- Bowl of hot water

### **Other - Cake equipment**

- Turntable (recommended to have one where the top and base plate come apart)
- Egg sponge former
- Polystyrene block

### **Other**

- Wire cutters
- Spirit level
- Flat nose tweezers
- Set square
- Small craft scissors
- Gluestick (non-toxic)

## **INGREDIENTS**

### **Cake**

- 8" round x 6" deep
- 6" round x 4" deep
- 4" round x 4" deep

### **Ganache**

- 3kg dark chocolate (2kg of dark chocolate to 1kg of cream (1000ml or 1.8UK or 2.16 US pints))

### **Sugarpaste**

- 2.5kg white

### **Cake drums**

- 4" round
- 6" round
- 8" round
- 12" round

### **Pro Gel colours**

- Pink - Fractal Colours
- Grey - Rainbow Dust
- Purple - Rainbow Dust

### **Petal Dusts**

- Kitty rose pink - Fractal colours
- Magenta - Sunflower sugar art
- Snow drift - Rainbow dust
- Citrus green - Rainbow dust
- Moss green - The sugar mill
- Primrose yellow - Sugarflair

### **Luster Dusts**

- Pearl blush pink - Rainbow Dust
- Dusky lilac - Sugarflair
- Shimmer pink - Sugarflair
- Silver sparkle - Sugarflair
- Pearl white - Saracino
- Dusky pink - Rainbow dust

### **Other - non-edibles**

- 17 dowels (food grade)
- 1 Posy pick
- 2 Micro posy picks
- 3 packets of small stamens (matted)
- Ribbon (for the cake drum)
- 30 gauge white florist wire
- White paper florist tape

### **Other - edibles**

- Wafer paper 48 sheets of 178mm x 142mm wafer paper (4 packs)
- Spray bottle with vodka (or white alcohol spirit)
- Dipping solution (96% ethanol/alcohol)
- Sugar glue
- Icing sugar

### **Method:**

- Gather equipment, making sure it is all clean and all food hygiene regulations adhered to
- Soften ganache to reach the desired consistency
- Slice the 8" round cake horizontally to achieve the desired number of layers
- Place the first layer of the cake in the centre of a 12" round cake drum, measuring to ensure it is in the centre and has an even space all round
- Fill each layer with ganache, making sure that it is spread to the edges of the cake
- Make sure the layers are placed with the base upwards
- Check that the cake is level (using the spirit level)
- Apply ganache to the sides of the cake
- Scrape the ganache sides, ensuring all lumps and blemishes are removed
- Check that the cake is perpendicular using a set square
- Apply a second layer of ganache, then repeat the process above, until the sides are completely smooth and perpendicular
- Carefully remove the crown

- Apply a thick layer of ganache to the cake top
- Scrape over the top of the cake to smooth the surface, removing any blemishes or lumps
- Remove excess ganache to ensure there is no lip on the top edge
- Repeat the process of applying, scraping and smoothing until a smooth result is achieved
- Ensure the cake is level
- Brush the sides and top with a wet pastry brush
- Smooth the sharp edge to prevent the sugarpaste covering from ripping
- For extra height, support and stability, attach each of the next two tiers of cake to a drum/card, which is exactly the same size as each cake and then attach to a working cake drum to apply the ganache

### **Supporting Notes:**

The wedding cake is one of the most important aspects of any wedding, so great care must be taken with every element of the cake production to achieve a high standard of finish. It is important that the cake looks its best to ensure it becomes a focal talking point and looks amazing for the photographs, which will hugely enhance the reputation of the cake designer.

Before starting any cake, but most especially a wedding cake, ensure that your equipment and working area have been cleaned thoroughly and that all aspects of food hygiene taken into account. It is important to remove any jewellery and nail polish, before thoroughly washing your hands. Also ensure that the cake decorator has the correct PPE, has hair tied back and meets the required hygiene standards

It is always best to set out the tools and ingredients needed for each section. In the ingredient list for this section it sets out that the cakes are 4" or 6" deep. This can consist of a number of shallower cakes to achieve the same depth. It is worth noting that the shallower the depth the more ganache you will use, and more height achieved, in the sandwich layers.

You will see in the video lesson that Paul uses shallow cakes, cut from a bakers slab. Baking is a very time consuming part of the overall time required to create a wedding cake. If the cake decorator enjoys baking and has the time, then that works well. However, if time is a constraint, then there's an option to find a baker who can produce the cakes to the same standard. Consider that the skill required to become a wedding cake decorator, is worth a higher hourly rate than a baker. If you prefer to bake from scratch, then it is recommended that oven space is used to the maximum and freeze what is not immediately needed. Cake decorators need to use their time wisely.

Ganaching of the cake is vital because it provides the foundation for the cake construction, support and structure. It takes patience to get the ganache neat and level, so allow plenty of time to complete the task to the highest possible standard.

It is important to understand how much your ingredient costs are when making any cake. This will form a crucial part of your pricing structure. In order to work out pricing, it is important to work out how much ganache and all other ingredients you have used. To do this, weigh the cakes before and after they are ganached. This will give the exact amount used and the cost can be worked out from there.

Cakes may be covered in buttercream, but the end result is less stable. Buttercream is much more sensitive to heat than ganache and far more likely to melt, causing the cake to bulge or even collapse.

Always make plenty of ganache to allow for every eventuality. Paul recommends the use of dark chocolate ganache made in the proportions of 2:1 (lbs chocolate to UK pints cream). The rule to consider is that the higher the cocoa content and the higher the proportion of chocolate to cream, then the higher the melting temperature and therefore the more sturdy the cake will be. Paul's preference is to use 55% cocoa content dark chocolate, which gives a strong structure, without the taste being too bitter. CakeFlix provides a guide which is available by clicking the [GANACHE CALCULATOR](#).

Depending on the depth of your cake, you need to consider how many sandwich layers you wish per tier. Cut the layers horizontally through the cake, then it's time to add the ganache. Place the largest/base tier of the cake in the centre of the 12" cake drum, then stick down with a small paddle of ganache. Make sure the base of the cake is uppermost and that the cake is exactly centre. This will be the last opportunity to centralise the cake, so it really is worth that extra double check.

In preparation for the next layer, spread ganache all over the top and over the edge of the layer. Add the layers of cake making sure that the top side of each layer is facing downwards. This is to ensure that the flatter bottom of the cake uppermost, giving the next layer a smooth surface to work from. Ensure that there is enough filling in between each layer, so the cake will look appetising with the filling evenly spread throughout, when cut. Repeat this process with the remaining layers.

Once all the layers have been added, using a spirit level, check that the cake is perfectly level. This is important because the base tier supports the entire stacked cake. A slight angle here will be exaggerated as the extra tiers and height is added.

Once you are happy that the cake is central and level, you should trim off any excess ganache and crumbs. It is now time to add the full ganache coating. Check to ensure that the ganache is soft enough to apply. If it's not the correct consistency then refrigerate or pop in the microwave in short bursts. The consistency will be right when the ganache makes a slapping sound when being mixed in the bowl.

Apply ganache to the cake using a paddling method. Start from the bottom and work slowly up to the top to make a crown. This is a layer of ganache which is of a higher level than cake top and is often referred to as the crown or collar. Use a generous coating of ganache, to give you a thick enough layer to work with. Don't worry about being too generous as much of it will be scraped off in the next stage of the process. Keep applying the ganache until the sides are thick and the crown is clearly visible all round the top of the cake.

The next stage is best performed on a turntable. Hold the side scraper with your thumb at the cake side and the fingers splayed out on the other side, which will help to distribute the pressure evenly. Hold onto the cake drum and starting at the bottom of the cake, scrape off the excess ganache, as demonstrated by Paul in the video. Using the set square, check that the sides of the cake are perpendicular. Repeat the process until you are happy with the finish, then put cake into the refrigerator until the ganache has set.

Remove from the fridge, then apply a second layer of softened ganache to smooth off the sides and fill any gaps. Any lumps of chocolate in the ganache should be pulled out and the

gaps filled, then re-scrape the sides. Work quickly because the second layer of ganache will set more quickly on top of the first layer.

The finish of the ganache must be very smooth, blemish free and sides completely perpendicular. If there is any adjustment to be made, shave off the excess and finish using the side scraper. Keep repeating the smoothing and filling process until the desired result has been achieved.

Moving on to covering the top of the cake, the crown created by ganaching the sides must be carefully removed. Using a hot wet palette knife, start at the lowest part of the crown, then carefully cut through the ganache to remove the crown, leaving a smooth edge.

Covering the top of the cake requires another generous layer of ganache. Ensure all lumps are removed and then, using the full length of the palette knife, smooth the top layer of ganache. Smooth the top using a hot wet ruler or the straight edge of a large bread knife. Repeat the process of adding ganache and scraping until you are happy with the result. Remove the excess from the sides of the cake, ensuring that there is no lip. Place in the refrigerator until just chilled. Remove from the fridge then trim off the excess using a hot, wet knife.

Inspect the cake for any blemishes or gaps and just repeat the smoothing process until the cake is completely smooth. Take the time to do this to the highest standard. Ensure that the edges are sharp and straight and the top completely level. Repeat the smoothing process until completely satisfied with the result. The edge may now be softened/rounded off a little using the brush/clean fingers. A slightly rounded edge means that the sugarpaste will not crack/split, as it could against a very sharp edge. Complete the ganaching stage by smoothing all over the ganache surfaces with a hot wet pastry brush. This ensures a final smoothing and makes the ganache tacky, making it easier for the sugarpaste to stick.

Weigh the completed cake to work out how much ganache has been used. Repeat the entire process with every tier of the cake.

To gain extra height and stability, the first layer of cake for the subsequent tiers is attached to a cake drum, which is exactly the same size/circumference as the layer. This is attached to a temporary cake drum to allow the ganaching process to be completed. This will be removed after the ganache has set and before the tier is lifted to be placed in the cake stack. See video for further instructions. The next stage is to cover the cake with sugarpaste.