



## new york's best cupcakes

Take a tour of the city's bakeries to find the tastiest treats.

Cupcakes, once relegated to bake sales and birthday parties, have captured the nation's heart—or at least its sweet tooth. Bakeries, some devoted entirely to these single-serving confections, churn out thousands each day, occasionally causing customers to queue around the block. I recently assembled vanilla cupcakes from several of the top Manhattan purveyors. These four were best, with the Vanilla, Vanilla Cupcake from Billy's Bakery—a light, flavorful cake with perfectly sweetened buttercream frosting—taking the lead. Try this easy one-bowl recipe at home. Don't be surprised if your neighbors start lining up around the block.



MAGNOLIA BAKERY

CUPCAKE CAFE

1<sup>st</sup>

### BILLY'S BAKERY

Inside this Chelsea storefront, those nostalgic for old-fashioned baked goods find an array of cupcakes in classic flavors such as chocolate and red velvet, as well as icebox pies and layer cakes.

82 • 184 Ninth Avenue • 212.647.9956 • [www.billysbakerynyc.com](http://www.billysbakerynyc.com)

### MAGNOLIA BAKERY

Tourists and locals alike flock to this tiny corner shop in the West Village to snag one of their signature cupcakes, but other items—the banana pudding, for one—have a loyal following, too.

82 • 401 Bleecker Street • 212.462.2572 • [www.magnoliabakery.net](http://www.magnoliabakery.net)

2<sup>nd</sup>

3<sup>rd</sup>

### BABYCAKES

When health-minded folk get a hankering for sweets, this all-natural bakery steps in to provide delicious cupcakes and other treats made without white sugar, dairy, wheat, or other allergens.

83.50 • 248 Broome Street • 212.677.5047 • [www.babycakesnyc.com](http://www.babycakesnyc.com)

### CUPCAKE CAFE

The prize for the prettiest cupcakes in town surely goes to this bakery, known for adorning each daily batch—as well as specially ordered cakes—with elegant buttercream flowers.

83.50 • 545 Ninth Avenue • 212.465.1530 • [www.cupcakecafe.com](http://www.cupcakecafe.com)

4<sup>th</sup>

## billy's vanilla, vanilla cupcakes

MAKES ABOUT 30 CUPCAKES

#### For the cupcakes:

- 1¾ cups cake flour, not self-rising
- 1¾ cups unbleached all-purpose flour
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 4 large eggs
- 1 cup whole milk
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

#### For the frosting:

- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 6–8 cups confectioners' sugar
- ½ cup milk
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- Colored sprinkles, for decorating (optional)

**1.** Preheat oven to 325°. Line cupcake pans with paper liners; set aside. In the bowl of a mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, combine flours, sugar, baking powder, and salt; mix on low speed until combined. Add butter, mixing until just coated with flour.

**2.** In a large glass measuring cup, whisk together eggs, milk, and vanilla. With mixer on medium speed, add wet ingredients in 3 parts, scraping down sides of bowl before each addition; beat until ingredients are incorporated, but do not overbeat.

**3.** Fill liners about two-thirds full with batter (you may need to make more than one batch). Bake, rotating pan halfway through, until a cake tester inserted in the center comes out clean, 17 to 20 minutes.

**4.** Transfer to a wire rack to cool completely. Repeat process with remaining batter as necessary.

**5.** To make the frosting: In the bowl of a mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter until smooth and creamy, 2 to 3 minutes. With mixer on low speed, add 6 cups sugar, milk, and vanilla; mix until light and fluffy. If necessary, gradually add remaining 2 cups sugar to reach desired consistency.

**6.** Once cupcakes have cooled, use a small offset spatula to frost top of each cupcake. Decorate with sprinkles, if desired. Serve at room temperature.