Easy Cannoli Cake with Ricotta Mascarpone Frosting

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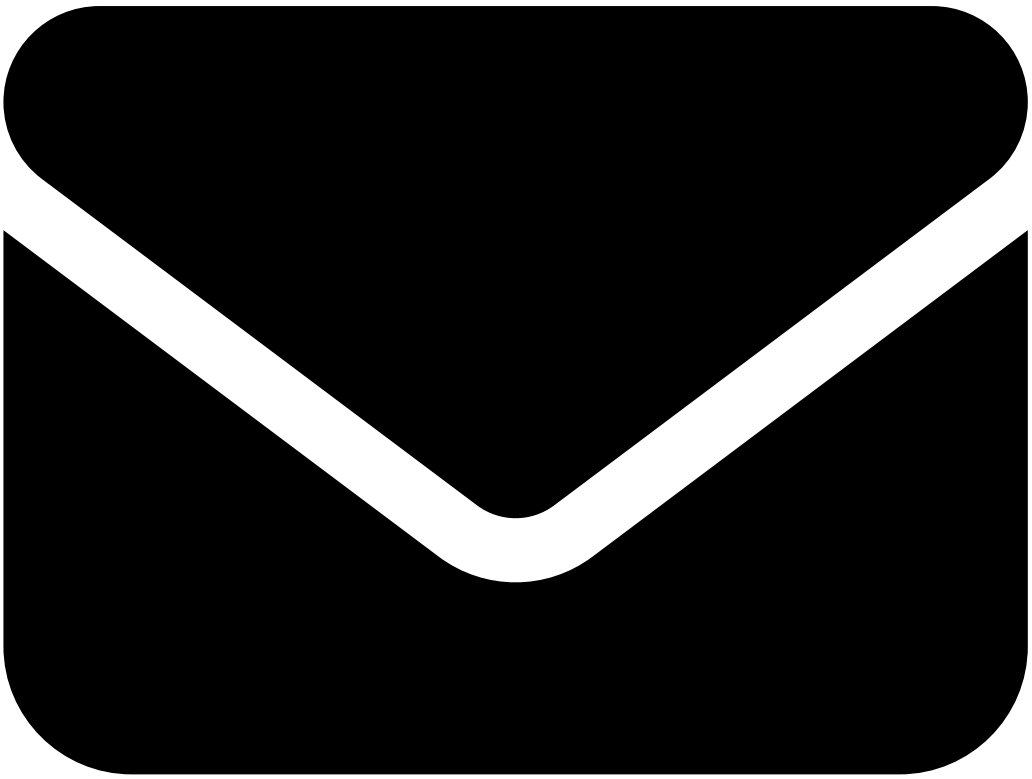




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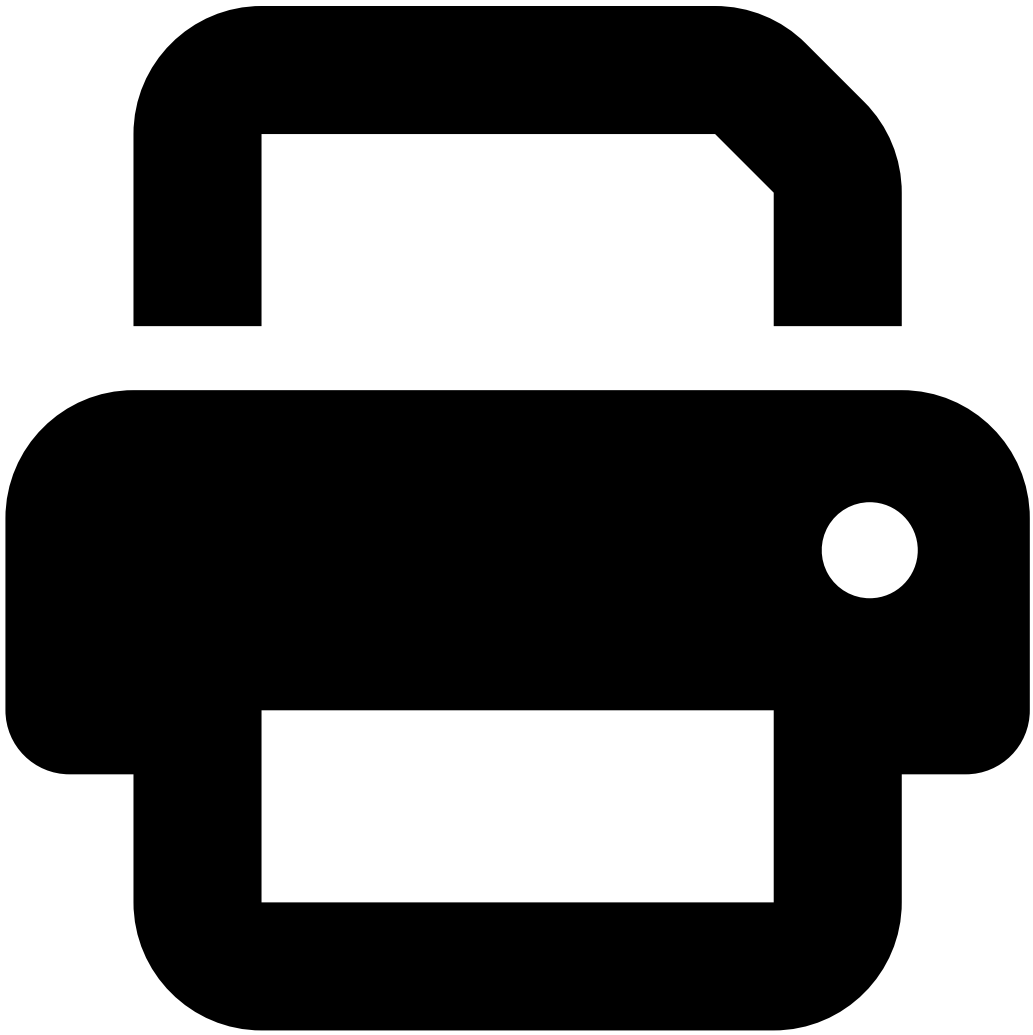

This Cannoli Cake started as a little kitchen experiment inspired by one of my favorite Italian desserts – the classic Sicilian cannoli. I wanted all that creamy ricotta flavor, a hint of cinnamon, and those sweet little chocolate chips, but in a simple, homemade cake that didn’t require frying shells or piping filling. So I baked a basic yellow cake – soft, buttery, and lightly sweet – and layered it with a rich ricotta mascarpone frosting that doubles as the filling.

The idea comes straight from Sicily, where cannoli were first created centuries ago as a special treat during Carnevale – a time of celebration and abundance before Lent. The traditional version uses crispy pastry shells filled with sweet ricotta cream, often flavored with orange zest, cinnamon, and chocolate. When Italian immigrants brought their beloved cannoli to America, bakers started finding new ways to enjoy those same flavors – and that’s how Cannoli Cake was born.

It’s a modern Italian-American twist on a Sicilian classic, combining all the familiar flavors of the original dessert in a soft, moist layer cake that’s perfect for birthdays, holidays, or Sunday dinners. Each bite tastes like home — creamy, comforting, and unmistakably Italian.

Things to know about this Easy Cannoli Cake with Ricotta Mascarpone Frosting

This Cannoli Cake is best made with **well-drained ricotta** — if your ricotta is watery, place it in a fine mesh sieve or cheesecloth overnight to remove excess liquid. This ensures the frosting stays thick, creamy, and easy to spread between the cake layers.

For the most authentic texture, **sprinkle the mini chocolate chips** between the layers and on top of the frosting instead of mixing them into the filling. This gives every bite a little crunch without weighing down the creamy filling.

Chilling the cake for at least **1 hour** after assembling helps the frosting set and makes slicing cleaner, especially if you want neat, even layers. The cake keeps beautifully in the refrigerator for up to **3 days**, making it a perfect make-ahead dessert for parties or holiday gatherings. Bring it to **room temperature for 15–20 minutes** before serving to enjoy the full creamy texture and flavor.

For a little extra flair, try **sprinkling chopped pistachios** on top or a **light drizzle of chocolate sauce** just before serving — it makes the cake look bakery-perfect without any extra effort.

If you love classic Italian desserts with a modern twist, be sure to try my Crostata Italian jam tart or Amaretti Cookies next — both pair perfectly with a slice of this Cannoli Cake

and a cup of espresso!

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This Easy Cannoli Cake with Ricotta Mascarpone Frosting captures all the beloved flavors of a classic Italian cannoli in a beautiful, simple layer cake. Moist vanilla cake is paired with a creamy frosting made with sweet ricotta, mascarpone, and hints of citrus and chocolate for an elegant dessert that feels special without being complicated. Perfect for birthdays, holidays, or any occasion where you want to bring the flavors of an Italian pastry shop to your table.

For the Yellow Cake

- 2½ cups all-purpose flour
- 2½ tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¾ cup unsalted butter, softened
- 11/3 cups granulated sugar
- 4 large eggs, room temperature
- 1 cup whole milk, room temperature
- 1 Tbsp vanilla extract

For the Cannoli Frosting (used for both filling and topping)

- 1½ cups whole milk ricotta, drained overnight if watery
- 1 cup mascarpone cheese (or cream cheese for a firmer texture)
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ½ tsp ground cinnamon
- ½ cup mini chocolate chips (plus extra for garnish)

1. ## Baking Tip: How to Get a Tall, Sliceable Cake

   For that beautiful bakery-style Cannoli Cake with two thick layers, bake the batter in **one 9-inch round cake pan with high sides (at least 2½–3 inches deep)**. You can also use an **8-inch round pan that's 3 inches deep** for an even taller result – just extend the baking time to about **45–50 minutes**, checking with a toothpick at 40 minutes.

   Once baked, **cool the cake completely**, then **chill it for 30 minutes** before slicing it horizontally. This helps the cake stay firm and gives you a clean, even cut for layering with the creamy cannoli filling.

2. **Preheat oven:**

   Set oven to **350°F (175°C)**. Grease and flour one 9-inch round cake pan (or two 8-inch if you prefer thinner layers).

3. **Make the yellow cake:**

   In a bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, and salt.In a large bowl, cream the butter and sugar until light and fluffy, about 3 minutes.

Beat in eggs one at a time, then stir in vanilla.Add the dry ingredients alternately with the milk, beginning and ending with the dry mixture.

Pour the batter into the prepared pan and bake for **35–40 minutes**, or until a toothpick comes out clean.

Cool completely, then **slice the cake horizontally in half** to create two layers.

4. **Make the cannoli frosting:**

   In a mixing bowl, beat ricotta, mascarpone, powdered sugar, vanilla, and cinnamon until smooth and creamy.

5. **Assemble the cake:**

   Place the bottom half of the cake on a serving plate and spread a thick layer of the frosting.

   Sprinkle haft the chocolate chips over the filling.Add the top cake layer and spread the remaining frosting all over the top and sides.

   Decorate with the remaining mini chocolate chips (and chopped pistachios for color optional)

6. **Chill before serving:**

   Refrigerate for at least **1 hour** before slicing to help the frosting set

Dessert
Italian
cannoli cake, Italian cannoli dessert,