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DIVAS ON A DIME

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PHOTO CREDIT: www.JasonCoblentz.com

PHOTO CAPTION: The Dot Cake gets a red, white and blue makeover just in time for

Independence Day.



Why Dot Cakes Are the Perfect Dessert for America's 250th Birthday

For America's 250th birthday, I had visions of creating something historically significant. Perhaps a colonial recipe. Maybe a dessert inspired by early American kitchens.

Then reality arrived carrying a deadline.

Instead, I found myself making the internet's latest obsession: The Viral Dot Cake.

The funny thing is that the more I learned about the trend, the more appropriate it seemed. Dot Cakes aren't fancy. They're layers of cake, frosting and colorful sprinkles. They're cheerful, nostalgic and designed to be shared. In a year filled with grand celebrations, perhaps that's exactly the kind of dessert we need.

Sometimes the things that bring people together are surprisingly simple. Here's the funny part: The internet's favorite dessert isn't an elaborate goldleaf freckled showpiece or a complicated bakery creation requiring trips to three stores and a monastery.

It's basically birthday cake. Like the kind of cake that we remember from childhood. Colorful, affordable, nostalgic and easy to share, Dot Cake captures something we often forget: Joy doesn't have to be expensive or complicated.

The original viral Dot Cakes are typically made in small cups or jars with

layers of cake and frosting topped with a thick blanket of colorful nonpareils. For Independence Day, I gave mine a patriotic twist by tinting the cake batter red and blue and topping each cake with nonpareils or dots.

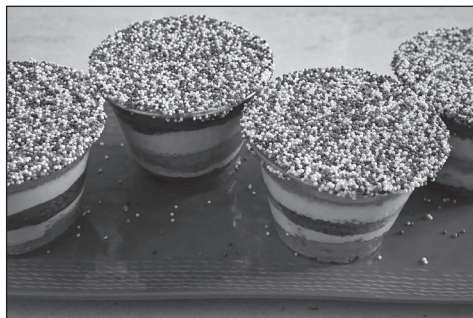
The beauty of Dot Cakes is that they're more about fun than perfection. Use a homemade cake or a boxed mix. Make frosting or open a can. The goal is a familiar birthday-cake flavor, plenty of frosting and a festive sprinkle topping that makes people smile.

PATRIOTIC DOT CAKES

Yield: 4 (9-ounce) cakes
Total Time: 40 minutes plus cooling
1 white cake mix, plus ingredients called for on package
Red and blue gel food coloring
1 batch frosting (recipe follows) or 1 container prepared frosting
1 cup nonpareil sprinkles, aka dots
4 clear jars, cups or ramekins (8- to 10-ounce size)

QUICK & EASY FROSTING

8 ounces cream cheese, softened
3 tablespoons butter, softened
1 (7-ounce) container marshmallow creme



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Preheat oven to 325 F. Prepare a half-sheet pan (13 inch by 18 inch by 1 inch) with non-stick spray and line

it with parchment. Alternatively, use a 9 by 13 cake pan.

Prepare cake batter according to package directions. For thin red and blue layers, divide the batter between two bowls. Tint one bowl red and the other blue using gel food coloring.

Spread the colored batters side by side in the sheet pan and bake for 20 minutes.

Alternatively, simply bake the cake according to package directions in a 9-by-13-inch pan. Bake until done and cooled completely.

To make the frosting, beat cream cheese, butter and marshmallow creme with an electric mixer until smooth and fluffy. Refrigerate. This frosting firms up beautifully when cold.

To Assemble:

Using a round cutter slightly smaller than your serving cups, cut cake rounds. Place one round in the bottom of each cup. Add a layer of frosting. Repeat with additional cake and frosting layers as desired.

Finish with a smooth layer of frosting on top. Use an offset spatula to get a perfectly smooth surface. Pour sprinkles onto a plate and gently turn each cake upside down and press the tops of the cakes into the sprinkles until completely covered.

Refrigerate for at least 1 hour or up to overnight before serving.

These cakes travel beautifully, making them perfect for potlucks, picnics and Independence Day celebrations.

Lifestyle expert Patti Diamond is the penny-pinching, party-planning, recipe developer and content creator of the website Divas On A Dime — Where Frugal, Meets Fabulous! Visit Patti at www.divasonadime.com and join the conversation on Facebook at [DivasOnADimeDotCom](https://www.facebook.com/DivasOnADimeDotCom). Email Patti at divapatti@divasonadime.com