

# EASY CAKE BORDER CHEAT SHEET

## SMALL SHELL BORDER



### Wilton Tip 21 or 32

- This border is a real classic and looks nice on almost any cake.
- Hold your piping bag at an angle, squeeze & let the icing mound up a bit, then stop squeezing as hard and just pull the piping bag toward you.
- Pipe another shell starting right after the mounded area on the shell you just piped.
- You can even spread the shells further apart if you like.

## LARGE SHELL BORDER



### Wilton Tip 1M or 4B

- You'll pipe this border the same as the small shell border. The shells will just be larger.
- This would normally be done on the bottom of the cake, since it's quite large.
- You could add it to the top of the cake, but you'd want to make sure the bottom border is at least as big as the top, otherwise the cake will look top heavy.

## ROUND PEARL BORDER



### Wilton 12 or 5 Round Tip

- Hold the piping page at a direct 90 degree angle and squeeze a small amount of icing out. Release the pressure and pull your piping bag away from the cake.
- Once you pipe the pearls, you almost always have icing sticking up into a point on each pearl. The trick for that is to add a bit of water on your finger and gently tap down that icing point.
- You'll need to add a bit more water to your finger about every third pearl, but it works like a charm.

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## PEARL SCALLOP BORDER



Wilton 12 or 5 Round Tip

- You'll do the same technique as the small shell border above, but you'll be using a round tip instead of a star tip.
- The Wilton tip 12 will give you a larger border than the tip 5 will.

## STAR BORDER



Wilton Tip 21 or 1M

- Hold your piping bag at a direct 90 degree angle and squeeze. Release pressure and pull your piping bag away from the cake.
- You can pipe small stars or even larger stars. Just make sure if you pipe larger stars that they are the bottom border. You don't want huge borders around the top of the cake and very small ones around the bottom. That will make a cake look top heavy.

## SWIRL BORDER



Wilton 1M, 4B or 21

- Hold the piping bag at a bit of an angle and squeeze with constant pressure as you move your piping bag in a swirling fashion.
- You can even take it up a notch by swirling different buttercream colors together and then piping on the swirled border.
- You can do small or large swirled borders as well.
- This border looks good as a top or bottom cake border.

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## ROSETTE BORDER



Wilton 1M, 2D or 2I

- You can do this a couple different ways. You can pipe a rosette by starting on the outside of the rosette and swirling toward the inside...that gives you the classic rosette look. You can also pipe rosettes by starting in the middle and swirling outward...that gives you the look of a rose. Using different tips will give you a different look as well and it looks good as a top and bottom cake border.

## DOLLOP BORDER



Wilton 6B or 8B, or a very large open round tip

- This border looks best on top of the cake. You'll hold the piping bag at a direct 90 degree angle from the cake. Squeeze and let the icing mound up a bit, then release the pressure and pull your piping bag straight up. It should form a nice point at the top.
- This technique works best with a very large open piping tip and with softer icing.

## LEAF BORDER



Wilton 352 Leaf Tip

- You'll need to hold the piping bag at almost a 90 degree angle from the cake, but tilt the tip up and your hand down just a bit.
- Make sure the points of the icing tip are on the top and bottom, not the sides.
- Squeeze and let the icing mound up just a bit. Release pressure and pull away from the cake and down a bit. You can pipe one row around the bottom of the cake and then go and pipe on another one above it to give it a layered look.
- You can also use larger leaf tips to get larger leaves.

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## FLEUR DE LIS BORDER



Wilton 21, or any star tip you feel comfortable with

- This border is piped around the top outside edge of the cake. You're going to make a large shell in the middle and two smaller shells, one on each side, that connects to the larger middle shell.
- Hold the piping bag at a 90 degree angle from the top, side of the cake. Squeeze and let the icing mound up into a large shell then release the pressure and pull the icing bag down. Next make a smaller shell to the left and to the right, but curve them in and connect them along the bottom of the larger shell.
- Make these all around the outside of your cake. It's a good idea to mark where you'll pipe these first, so they are evenly spaced.

## RUFFLE BORDER



Wilton 104 or 103 petal tip and 12 round tip

- For this border, you'll use a petal tip to get the ruffles and a round tip to pipe a pearl border over the top edge.
- Hold the piping bag sideways against the cake and make sure that the skinny edge of the petal tip is facing down. (The skinny edge is what will give it the ruffled look.) You can either pipe each ruffle individually by making a closed 'u' piping motion, or you can just pipe lines of ruffles by doing a continuous 'w' motion across the bottom of the cake.
- Use a larger petal tip for even bigger ruffles.
- Pipe a pearl or scallop border over the top edge.

## REVERSE SHELL BORDER:



Wilton 21 tip, or an even smaller star tip will work

- You pipe this one the same as a regular shell border, but you won't do it in a straight line. Each shell will either come from the right, or the left and then stop in the middle. Hold the piping bag at an angle over the top of the cake, squeeze to mound up a bit of icing, then release the pressure a bit and curve to either the left or right and come down with the tail of the shell. Now do the same thing, but come from the opposite side and then meet in the middle where your previous shell's tail was piped.

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## HELPFUL TIPS FOR PIPING BORDERS

- Typically, the bottom border of a cake is larger than the top border (if you have a top border at all). You definitely don't want the top border to be huge and bulky because it'll just make the cake look top heavy.
- I don't like putting my cake on a turn table while I'm piping borders. It just turns on me. I find it helpful to just set the cake on a table to pipe the borders. Just make sure to keep turning the cake as you go, or your borders will end up misshapen.
- You don't have to make a different type of buttercream just to pipe the borders. Most of the time you can use the same type of buttercream you used to ice the cake. Unless you're piping flowers etc., there's really no need to make a thicker or shortening based icing just for the borders.
- If you find that your buttercream is a little too soft though, you can always just add in a little more confectioner's sugar to thicken it up (if its American Buttercream). If it's Swiss meringue buttercream, you could always just pop it in the fridge to firm up a bit more.
- Make sure if you're using a shortening based buttercream, that you keep it covered in the bowl. Shortening based buttercream will form a crust over it and you don't want that to mess with your piping.
- When you start piping. Start at the back because you'll likely never get a perfect seam where you started and ended.

## FAQs FOR PIPING BORDERS

- My buttercream border won't stick to the cake and keeps pulling up when I lift up the piping tip.  
Your buttercream is likely too thick. Add it back to your bowl and add in a very small amount of milk or cream to thin it just a bit. Be careful here, or you can very quickly add too much and make it too thin.
- I'm having trouble because my hands are shaky.  
Ok, welcome to my world. I have shaky hands too and I don't even drink caffeine. What helps me is that I use my other hand to stabilize my piping hand. You can see a bit of this in the video. It really does help. Also try not to fill your bag really full. It makes it harder to pipe and gives you less control. Plus if your icing is too thick, it'll make your hands shake even worse. Just know you're not alone.
- I messed up in one spot.  
You can do three things:
  - You can make that the back of the cake. (I'm serious...that's a legit way to fix it.)
  - You can just scrape off that small area of the border and re-pipe it.
  - You can scrape off the entire border and re-pipe the whole thing.Which method will depend on how bad the goof is and the other design elements on the cake. If you've got a super smooth iced cake, it might not be worth taking the risk of messing that up, just to fix a small area of the border.  
Also, if you're using crusting buttercream (buttercream made with shortening), it'll form this really thin shell over the icing, which works to hold it together if you have to scrape a small area of the border off. So if you end up needing to do that, just wait about 15 minutes and let the icing crust over a little before you scrape that are off and then try scraping that area off with a toothpick for more precision. That might help.