

## Red Velvet Lover's Cookbook

**Deborah Harroun**

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*Harroun's cookbook is more than just a collection of recipes—she explores the intricacy and mystery of red velvet's unique color, texture, and roots.*

Most would expect a meal of grits, biscuits, and fried chicken to be rounded off with another Southern staple, red velvet cake. Yet author Deborah Harroun explains the dessert may have Northern roots; it's rumored to have originated in the ritzy department stores of both New York City and Canada. What's more, Harroun, the blogger behind *Taste and Tell*, proves that the beloved red-velvet flavor should not be reserved for merely cakes and cupcakes. In her wickedly indulgent *Red Velvet Lover's Cookbook*, Harroun tempts palettes with ruby-tinged classics like Red Velvet Cupcakes to the more unexpected, such as Red Velvet Cannoli.

Harroun, who has been featured in publications such as *Every Day With Rachel Ray* and *Better Homes and Gardens*, admits she was first introduced to the flavor in the classic scene from *Steel Magnolias*, in which the groom's red-velvet cake is shaped like an armadillo. Harroun points out that the cake's signature crimson hue has jumped in popularity since its big screen debut; it's now a standby in cupcake shops and shows up in waffles and pancakes for brunch.

As more and more bakers want to eschew artificial coloring and additives in their food, Harroun devotes the end of her introduction to the mission of finding a natural coloring alternative, like beets. Yet ultimately, she concludes that their sweetness, moisture, and pH would significantly alter the original red-velvet flavor and texture.

Each of Harroun's fifty easy-to-follow recipes is accompanied by a mouth-watering full-color photograph. The vivid colors capture the intense contrast between the red treats and the classic icings and frostings, including cream cheese, marshmallow, and white chocolate. Readers merely thumbing through Harroun's collection will be drawn in, for instance, by the white pillowy insides of the Red Velvet Surprise Cupcakes.

The simple but decadent recipes are accompanied by a few introductory sentences of helpful tips, or personal connections such as how her own mother's cake roll compares to her own. In the end, Harroun's culinary tour of red velvet will delight dessert enthusiasts looking to take a classic, if not mysterious, flavor to the next delicious level.

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