



Kitchen Cheat Sheet: King Cake Poke Cake

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Tips and Time Savers

- Bake the cake just until set—overbaking makes it stubborn and less willing to soak.
- Poke deep and evenly, spacing holes about an inch apart so every bite gets love.
- Pour the filling slowly in stages, letting it disappear before adding more. Patience pays off here.
- Chill the cake after soaking to help the structure set before frosting.
- Use fully softened cream cheese for a smooth topping—cold cream cheese will absolutely betray you.
- Add sprinkles after the frosting sets slightly to keep the colors crisp, not muddy.

Storage

- Refrigerate covered for up to 4 days; the flavor actually improves after the first chill.
- Let slices sit at room temperature 15–20 minutes before serving so the texture softens and the frosting relaxes.
- Do not leave out overnight—this cake has dairy and opinions.
- To freeze, wrap the unfrosted cake tightly in plastic wrap and foil; freeze up to 2 months.
- Thaw overnight in the refrigerator, then add frosting and sprinkles fresh.
- Freezing with frosting is possible but not ideal—the texture can get weird and we're not inviting that energy.

Variations

Cake mix swaps that work

- Butter cake mix: Richer, slightly denser, and very on-brand for King Cake vibes. This is the easiest upgrade without changing anything else.
- White cake mix: Lighter and sweeter. Works beautifully if you want the cinnamon layer and frosting to be the stars.
- French vanilla cake mix: Extra cozy, extra dessert-y. Plays especially well with the cream cheese frosting.

FAQs

Can I make King Cake Poke Cake ahead of time?

Yes, and it actually gets better. Make it the day before, cover, refrigerate, and let the flavors settle into their parade float era.

Do I need to refrigerate this cake?

Yes. Between the cream cheese topping and the soaked filling, this one lives in the fridge. Pull it out 20–30 minutes before serving so it softens up.

Can I use a different cake mix?

Yellow is classic, but white or butter cake works fine. Skip chocolate—this isn't that kind of party.

What if I don't want to use coffee?

Use milk instead. The coffee deepens the flavor without tasting like coffee, but the cake will still behave if you opt out.

How long does King Cake Poke Cake last?

Up to 4 days refrigerated, covered. The texture holds surprisingly well, assuming no one “just checks on it” repeatedly.

Can I freeze it?

You can freeze the cake without the topping. Add the cream cheese layer and sprinkles after thawing for best results.

Nice to Have

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If you don't already have a stash of tiny plastic babies lurking in a junk drawer, this is your sign. These mini King Cake babies are the perfect size for hiding in slices, cakes, or general Mardi Gras mischief—no weird melting, no sharp edges, no panic. Grab a pack and you'll be set for years of King Cake season, baby-finding drama, and extremely unnecessary competitive energy at the dessert table.

And yes—you're absolutely the kind of person who plans ahead for this. Iconic behavior.

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