

Red Velvet Cupcakes

"The Best Red-Velvet Cupcake Recipe for Summer Barbecues, Picnics and Celebrations,"

By Vallery Lomas

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Total Time: 1 hour, 15 minutes

Makes: 24 cupcakes

Tips for Success

Cooking spray is your friend. Lightly spray the inside of the cupcake liners with cooking spray to ensure your cupcakes can be smoothly removed from the liner and to prevent clingy crumbs.

Spoon and level. Measure the flour and cocoa precisely by spooning each into a measuring cup until it overflows slightly, then leveling the top with the back of a knife

Don't forget to sift. Cake flour and cocoa powder clump. Sifting prevents that and makes them combine easily. I simply sift through a fine-mesh strainer into a bowl.

Ingredients

For the cupcakes:

2½ cups cake flour

3 tablespoons natural unsweetened or Dutch process cocoa powder

1 teaspoon kosher salt

1½ cups vegetable oil

1½ cups granulated sugar

2 large eggs at room temperature

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

½ teaspoon red gel food coloring or 2 teaspoons red liquid food coloring

1 cup buttermilk

1 teaspoon baking soda

1½ teaspoons fresh lemon juice or vinegar

For the frosting:

8 ounces cream cheese, softened

1 stick (½ cup) unsalted butter

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

5 cups powdered sugar

Directions

1. Heat oven to 350 degrees and place a rack in middle position. Line two standard-size cupcake pans (12 cavities per pan) with cupcake liners.
2. Sift cake flour and cocoa powder into a large bowl. Add salt and whisk to combine. Set aside.
3. Use a mixer with paddle attachment to beat oil and sugar together on medium speed. Add eggs, one at a time, beating to incorporate before adding the next. Add vanilla and food coloring, and mix to combine.

4. Reduce mixer speed to low, add a third of the flour mixture and mix well. Add half the buttermilk and mix well. Add half remaining flour mixture and continue to mix on low. Add remaining buttermilk and mix until well combined. Add remaining flour mixture. Scrape sides and bottom of bowl and mix well. Batter will be very loose.
5. In a small bowl, combine baking soda and lemon juice. Add to batter and mix on medium until just combined. Batter will gently burp bubbles. Divide batter evenly, filling each cupcake liner $\frac{3}{4}$ full.
6. Bake until a tester inserted in middle comes out clean, 18-20 minutes. Set pans on a rack to cool completely, 30 minutes.
7. Make the frosting: In a mixing bowl, combine cream cheese, butter and vanilla extract. Beat with paddle attachment on high speed until creamy and smooth. Sift in powdered sugar. Beat on low until combined, increase speed to medium and beat until smooth, about 2 minutes. Transfer to a piping bag and pipe frosting onto cooled cupcakes. Or, spoon frosting on top. Serve immediately, or store in refrigerator in an airtight container up to one week. Serve at room temperature.