

Cooking With Justin

Session: Designer Cupcakes

Overview:

Cupcakes are all the rage today! While these desserts may look beautiful, unfortunately many don't taste very good or are downright way too sweet. The key to truly great cupcakes is not to start with a cupcake recipe, but to start with a great *cake* recipe and adapt it to cupcake 'format'. Today we will ...

Session Plan:

- Discuss cupcake recipes
- Make chocolate and vanilla cupcakes (*group activity*)
- Discuss icing recipes
- Prepare icings (*group activity*)
- Decorate cupcakes (*group activity*)

Recipes:

- Grandma's chocolate (cup)cakes
- Vanilla cupcakes
- Chocolate maple icing
- Sweetened whipped cream
- Coconut flavored cream cheese icing

Further Information:

- www.jvsquad.us -> "cooking" menu for recipes and detailed directions
- handouts will be posted on line

Grandma's Chocolate Cupcakes

Prepared Ingredients:

- 1 cup sugar
- 1/3 cup vegetable oil (any kind with no strong taste)
- 1 egg
- 2 oz. (2 squares) unsweetened bakers chocolate, melted
- 1+1/3 cup sifted, unbleached flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda (exactly)
- 1 tsp. baking powder (exactly)
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 cup boiling water

Directions:

- 1) Preheat oven to 300 °F.
- 2) Add sugar to mixing bowl and mix in the oil.
- 3) Mix in the egg.
- 4) Melt chocolate squares in microwave (or over steam bath for best results) and slowly stir into mix until even color. Scrape down bowl and paddle.
- 5) In a separate bowl mix the flour, salt, baking soda and baking powder until blended evenly. A whisk works nicely.
- 6) In small batches, add the dry ingredient mixture, allowing it to mix in without creating lumps. As you come to finish this step, the batter will form a mass on the paddle and clean the sides of the bowl. It will be a little crumbly. Stop the mixer one or two times to clear the dough from the paddle for even distribution of all ingredients.
- 7) After the mixture of dry ingredients, add the boiling water onto the dough a few tablespoons at a time, allowing it to mix in fully after each addition. *Patience is critical here* until the batter converts to a slurry. We add the water in quarters to allow it to reach homogeneity at each step so no lumps are present when done. When complete, the batter will be VERY THIN.
- 8) Last, mix in the vanilla extract.
- 9) Line a 12-cup cake tin (originally this recipe filled 1 8x8" pan) and pour batter equally amongst all.
- 10) Baking typically requires 40-45 minutes, but you know your oven, so check and adjust as needed after 30 minutes..
- 11) Garnish with frosting and a simple ganache and refrigerate for 24-48 hours for best flavor.

Notes:

- This is a fabulous cake recipe! And it freezes well.
- If your bowl is big enough and your arm strong enough, double and triple batches work fine.
- Many cake recipes will dry out in cupcake format (this is why oil, etc is popular in cupcake recipes), but icing the cupcakes will reintroduce some of the moisture lost during baking.
- To spice it up further, you can add 1 tablespoon of liquor of choice (optional)

Further Information:

- www.jvsquad.us -> "cooking" menu for recipes and detailed directions of the cake recipe

Vanilla Cupcakes

Prepared Ingredients:

- 2 1/4 cups all purpose flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 sticks (8 ounces) unsalted butter, room temperature and cut up into 1-inch pieces
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 5 large eggs
- 2 tablespoon vanilla extract

Directions:

- 1) Preheat oven to 350 °F.
- 2) Prep cupcake pans with cupcake liners; set aside.
- 3) In a large bowl, whisk together the flour and baking powder; set aside.
- 4) Using a mixer, mix the butter and sugar until light and fluffy (about 5 minutes).
- 5) Add in one egg at a time, scraping down the sides of the bowl after each egg.
- 6) Slowly stir in the vanilla.
- 7) Slowly stir in the dry ingredients until incorporated.
- 8) Spoon into the prepared cupcake pans and bake until cooked through (about 25 minutes)

Notes:

- You know your oven best, so test at 20 minutes, etc.
- This is a hefty cupcake, good for structural designs.
- To lighten the "mouth feel" / texture, reduce an egg and add a little water, or change from AP to cake (low gluten) flour.

Further Information:

- www.jvsquad.us -> "cooking" menu for recipes and detailed directions (some in progress)

Sweetened Whipped Cream

Prepared Ingredients:

- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 tablespoons sugar

Directions:

- 1) Combine all ingredients in mixing bowl and whisk until soft peaks form.

Notes:

- To spice it up further, you can add 1 tablespoon of liquor of choice (optional)

Further Information:

- www.jvsquad.us -> "cooking" menu for recipes and detailed directions (some in progress)

Chocolate Maple Icing

Prepared Ingredients:

- 1 cup bittersweet or milk chocolate chips
- 1/4 cup maple syrup
- 1 tablespoon of nut butter of choice (optional; for example peanut butter, almond butter, Nutella, etc.)

Directions:

- 1) Melt chocolate together in bowl over boiling water (double boiler style) or in a microwave.
- 2) Using a spatula mix the maple syrup and nut butter in with the melted chocolate, it will stiffen at first. Stir until smooth
- 3) Spread icing on cupcakes or cake with a butter knife.
- 4) If desired, decorate the with sprinkles while the icing is still warm. Otherwise chill to set icing.
- 5) Store in a container of your choice.

Notes:

- My favorite way to decorate chocolate iced cupcakes is martini glass style!
- To reduce the chocolate content, substitute 1/2 (or more) of the chocolate with milk chocolate
- Grade "B" maple syrup (unfiltered, if you can get it) adds a smoky element to the icing flavor

Further Information:

- www.jvsquad.us -> "cooking" menu for recipes and detailed directions (some in progress)

Coconut Flavored Cream Cheese Icing

Prepared Ingredients:

- 8 ounces of cream cheese (typically 1 package)
- 2 ounces of unsalted butter, room temperature
- 2 cups powder sugar (sometimes referred to as "super fine" sugar and boxed like sugar cubes)
- 1-2 teaspoons coconut extract

Directions:

- 1) Using a mixer, mix the cream cheese and butter until softened
- 2) Slowly mix in the powder sugar (1/2 cup at a time until combined)
- 3) Mix in the coconut extract
- 4) Spread icing on cupcakes or cake with a butter knife.
- 5) Store in a container of your choice.

Notes:

- My favorite way to decorate coconut iced cupcakes is with more coconut (shavings)!
- Toasted coconut for the superlative flavor!

Further Information:

- www.jvsquad.us -> "cooking" menu for recipes and detailed directions (some in progress)

Session Evaluation: Designer Cupcakes

Thank you for cooking with Justin today! Please take 1 minute to provide some feedback so I can better tailor future sessions. Please note that a "3" is good, and all 5s is not particularly helpful.

Content:	Not at All		Decent		Absolutely
1) The session was interesting	1	2	3	4	5
2) The material was covered in enough detail	1	2	3	4	5
3) Things moved along nicely	1	2	3	4	5
4) Technique was adequately demonstrated	1	2	3	4	5
5) Justin looked like he knew what he was doing	1	2	3	4	5
6) The handouts looked good/ useful	1	2	3	4	5

Participation:	Not at All		Decent		Absolutely
1) This was worth your time	1	2	3	4	5
2) You would try another session	1	2	3	4	5
3) You prefer to watch	1	2	3	4	5
4) You wanted to be more involved	1	2	3	4	5
5) You may try one or more recipes on your own	1	2	3	4	5

Possible Future Sessions:	Not for me		Maybe		I'll Be There
1) Wok cooking	1	2	3	4	5
2) Pan suaces	1	2	3	4	5
3) Pizza from scratch	1	2	3	4	5
4) Sushi basics (focus on non-raw)	1	2	3	4	5
5) How about this: _____					

Comments & Suggestions:
