

RED VELVET CUPCAKES

Cupcakes are fun to decorate and are easier to portion out from the freezer. This is the same recipe as in the cookbook except I'm making cupcakes this time around instead of a Bundt cake.

Makes about 34 cupcakes.

INGREDIENTS

Set 1

2 cups all-purpose flour

2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder

1 ½ teaspoons baking soda

1 teaspoon salt

Set 2

2 sticks unsalted butter, room temperature

1 ¾ cups granulated sugar

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

3 large, whole eggs, COLD

5 teaspoons red food coloring

Set 3

1 cup buttermilk, COLD

2 tablespoons white distilled vinegar

Tools: medium bowl, large bowl, rubber spatula, electric beater, strainer, 2 to 3 cupcake pans, 1 and 2-tablespoon measuring spoons, paper cupcake liners, toothpicks, cooling rack, cake decorating bags and tips, off-set cake decorating spatula, cupcake sprinkles

DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.

Line the cupcake pans with paper liners.

In a medium bowl, sift the flour and cocoa powder. Add the baking soda and salt. Stir to combine and set aside.

In a large bowl, cream the butter and sugar. Add the cold eggs, vanilla, and red food coloring.

Add the vinegar to the buttermilk and stir.

Pour half of the dry mixture into the egg mixture then add half of the buttermilk mixture. Beat till barely combined then add the remaining dry ingredients and buttermilk mixture. Beat till well combined.

To portion the batter evenly so your cupcakes look uniform after baking, add 3 tablespoons of batter to each cupcake liner. I have a 2-tablespoon measuring spoon so it makes this part kind of easy. If you have a 3-tablespoon

ice cream scooper that would be easier. If the cupcakes don't need to be perfect, you could measure ¼ cup of batter then spoon out "about" 1 tablespoon before pouring the batter into the liner.

Bake for 18 minutes. Insert a toothpick in the center. If it comes out with minimal crumbs or clean, the cupcakes are done; if it comes out with batter or lots of wet crumbs, bake 2 to 3 more minutes and check again. Baking time depends on your oven. Repeat toothpick test till it comes out with minimal crumbs. When done, remove from cupcake pan and cool on wire rack while you make the frosting.

FROSTING

INGREDIENTS

Set 1

1 stick unsalted butter, room temperature, about 70 degrees F.

2 – 8-ounce blocks of real, full-fat cream cheese, room temperature about 70 degrees F.

½ cup powdered sugar

Tools: medium bowl, strainer, electric beater, rubber spatula, plastic wrap

DIRECTIONS

Beat the butter until light and fluffy. Add the cream cheese and beat till well combined. Sift the powdered sugar into the bowl. Beat till well combined.

Decorate the cupcakes in a simple way by smearing frosting on top and adding sprinkles. Or, make it fancy with a cake decorating tips.

You can fill the cake decorating bags with frosting using a spatula, or you can do it a much cleaner, efficient way, especially if you are using multiple decorating tips.

Lay a sheet of plastic wrap out about two feet left to right. Scoop a mound of the frosting, about 1 to 1 ½ cups, in a diagonal direction, from bottom left corner to upper right corner. Fold the bottom part of the plastic over the mound to cover it completely then press around the mound to seal the plastic together. Roll the mound over then twist each end and tuck under the mound. You now have a secure portion of icing, wrapped like a piece of Bazooka gum.

When ready to fill the decorating bag that you have already fitted with a tip, untuck one end of the plastic wrap, cut the excess near the level of the frosting. Hold the wrapped mound in both hands and squeeze just to open the end a little bit. Drop the open end into the prepared bag and shake a little so the bag and frosting drops closer to the tip. Twist the open end of the piping bag so there is not empty space in the bag. The twisted part of the bag should always be right over the icing. Readjust the twist as you use the icing. This gives you better control of the bag and prevents the icing from coming out onto your hand.

Watch my video on YouTube for how to fill a piping bag – “Best Piping Bag Tips: Fill a Piping Bag”

Recipe courtesy Paula Quinene of PaulaQ.com.