

RED VELVET CUPCAKES WITH COCONUT BUTTERCREAM FROSTING

INGREDIENTS

for the cupcakes

2 1/2 cups sifted cake flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons cocoa powder (unsweetened)
2 ounces red gel food coloring
1/2 cup unsalted butter, at room temperature
1 1/2 cups sugar
2 eggs, at room temperature
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 cup buttermilk, at room temperature
1 teaspoon white vinegar
1 teaspoon baking soda

for the coconut frosting

1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature
2 1/2 cups powdered sugar
1 can coconut milk, reduced to 1/3 cup (Reducing instructions below)
Seeds scraped from 1 split vanilla bean or 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1/8 teaspoon salt

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a standard muffin pan with paper baking cups.

Sift together the cake flour, baking powder, and salt into a medium bowl; set aside. In a small bowl, mix food coloring and cocoa powder to form a thin paste without lumps; set aside.

In the mixing bowl of your stand mixer, beat butter and sugar together until light and fluffy, about 3-4 minutes. Beat in eggs, one at a time, then beat in vanilla and the red cocoa paste, scraping down the bowl with a spatula as you go.

Add one third of the flour mixture to the butter mixture, beat well, then beat in half of the buttermilk. Beat in another third of flour mixture, then second half of buttermilk. End with the last third of the flour mixture, beat until well combined, making sure to scrape down the bowl with a spatula. Note: if you have never made red velvet cake, the color is shockingly red... it's supposed to be that way, obviously.

In a small bowl, mix vinegar and baking soda. Yes, it will fizz! Add it to the cake batter and stir well to combine. Fill cupcake lines 2/3 of the way full and bake cupcakes for 22-25 minutes. Cool the cupcakes in the pan for 5 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.

To make the frosting: First, make your reduced coconut milk: Bring coconut milk to boil in large deep saucepan over medium-high heat (coconut milk will boil up high in pan). Reduce heat to medium-low; boil until reduced to 1/2 cup (you will only need 1/3 cup for the recipe), stirring occasionally, 25 to 30 minutes. Remove from heat; cool completely. Transfer to small bowl. Cover and chill. Can be made 2 days ahead and kept chilled.

In the bowl of a stand mixer, beat butter until smooth. Add sugar, 1/3 cup reduced coconut milk, seeds from vanilla bean, and salt. Beat on medium-low speed until blended, scraping down sides of bowl. Increase to medium-high and beat until light and fluffy.

Pipe frosting onto cooled cupcakes. Sprinkle with shredded toasted coconut, or decorate as desired, in this case, with frosting and blue sprinkles for the Fourth of July.