

STRAWBERRY CHEESECAKE "LUCKY LADYBUG" CUPCAKES

INGREDIENTS

for the Cupcakes

1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
3/4 teaspoons table salt
1 cup granulated sugar
1 1/2 sticks unsalted butter, softened but slightly cool, cut into 12 pieces
3 large eggs
3/4 cups milk
1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract

for the cheesecake filling

1 1/2 cup fresh strawberries, washed, hulled and sliced
1/4 cup granulated sugar
8 ounces (one package) cream cheese, softened to room temperature
1/2 cup heavy cream
1/2 teaspoon whipped cream stabilizer
1 tablespoon corn starch mixed with 2 tablespoons of water.

for the frosting

8 ounces (1 package) cream cheese, softened to room temperature
1 stick unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
3 cups confectioners sugar
green gel food coloring

to decorate

green sprinkles
chocolate lady bugs

DIRECTIONS

For the cupcakes: Preheat oven to 350F. Line a muffin pan with paper baking cups and set aside.

In the bowl of a stand mixer, combine the flour, baking powder, salt, and sugar on low speed. Add the butter, 1 piece at a time, and combine until the mixture resembles coarse sand. Add the eggs, 1 at time, and mix until fully combined. Add the milk and vanilla, increase the speed to medium, and mix until the batter is light, fluffy and free of lumps.

Fill the lined muffin cups three-quarters full, being careful not to overfill. Bake until a toothpick inserted in the center of the cupcake comes out clean, about 12-15 minutes. Cool the cupcakes in the pan for 5 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.

Make your filling: Process sliced strawberries and 1/4 cup granulated sugar in a blender or food processor until smooth, stopping to scrape down sides as needed. Reserve 1/2 cup. Add in cream cheese and process until smooth. Pour into a bowl and set aside in the refrigerator. Using your stand mixer or an electric mixer, whip the heavy cream and whipped cream stabilizer until peaks form. Do not over whip. Fold into the cream cheese mixture and continue to refrigerate while the cupcakes cool.

Put the reserved 1/2 cup of strawberry puree in a small sauce pan over medium heat. Add corn starch slurry and bring to a boil until the mixture starts to thicken. Remove from the heat and let cool completely.

For the frosting, cream the cream cheese, butter, and vanilla in the bowl of your stand mixer. Add the sugar and beat until smooth. Add green food coloring gel until the color you desire is reached.

To assemble: Insert a small knife at a 45 degree angle about 1/8 inch from the edge of each cupcake and cut all the way around, remove a cone of cake. Cut away all but the top 1/4 inch of the cone; leaving only a small disk of cake which will be used to top the cupcake. With a small spoon, pour in 1/2 teaspoon of the strawberry puree mixture into the hole. Fill each one with 2 tablespoons of the cream cheese mixture and top with the disk. Frost liberally with the green cream cheese frosting, top with green sprinkles and place a chocolate ladybug on top (still in its wrapping.).