

MINI CLAY POT FLOWER CUPCAKES, FOR MAY DAY (VANILLA CUPCAKES WITH VANILLA BUTTERCREAM FROSTING AND SUGAR COOKIES)

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 frosting

1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, at room temperature
1 teaspoon vanilla
3 cup confectioners sugar
green sprinkles

for the sugar cookies

1 1/2 cups butter, softened
2 cups white sugar
4 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
5 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon salt

For the icing

2 large egg whites
8 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
3 cups confectioners (powdered or icing) sugar, sifted
pink, orange or yellow food coloring

You will also need: 24 mini-terra cotta pots, small flower shaped cookie cutters and tooth picks

DIRECTIONS

For the cookies (you can make these up to a week in advance): In the mixing bowl of your stand mixer, cream together butter and sugar until smooth. Beat in eggs and vanilla. Stir in the flour, baking powder, and salt. Cover, and chill dough for at least one hour (or overnight). Preheat oven to 400F. Roll out dough on floured surface 1/4 to 1/2 inch thick. Using your flower cookie cutters, cut out at minimum 24 flower cookies (this batch will make almost double that,

so I just made as many as I could). Place cookies 1 inch apart on ungreased cookie sheets and insert tooth picks into each, vertically. Bake 10-12 minutes in preheated oven. Cool completely.

To make the icing: in the bowl of your electric mixer, beat the egg whites with 2 tablespoons of the lemon juice until combined. Add the sifted powdered sugar and beat on low speed until combined and smooth. The icing needs to be used immediately or transferred to an airtight container as royal icing hardens when exposed to air. Color with food coloring of your choice. Using a small piping bag or bottle and a #1 tip, decorate the cookies. I just decorated the middles of each, because I don't like to use too much food coloring in my baking.

For the cupcakes: Preheat oven to 350F. Line a mini 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.

To make the frosting, cream together the butter and vanilla until light and fluffy. Mix in the confectioners sugar a little bit at a time. The frosting may be a little loose, so add a bit more powdered sugar as necessary. Refrigerate to set for 20-30 minutes.

To assemble: place a mini-cupcake into each mini terra cotta pot. Using a piping bag, frost cupcakes and sprinkle with green sprinkles. Insert a flower into the top of each. Chill for at least 30 minutes to firm up the frosting.