

BLUE CRAB CUPCAKES, FOR MARYLAND

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
blue or turquoise gel food coloring

You will also need: blue string licorice and sugar eye-balls (that you can buy at craft-supply stores)

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 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, 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. Add the food coloring a little at a time until you have your desired color. Refrigerate to set for 20-30 minutes.

To assemble: Using a piping bag and a large plain tip, frost cupcakes. Add eyeballs and six pieces of licorice strands for legs.