

HUMMINGBIRD CUPCAKES

INGREDIENTS

for the Dried Pineapple Flowers (garnish)

1 whole fresh pineapple

for the Cupcakes

2 cups all-purpose flour

1/2 teaspoon baking soda

3/4 teaspoon salt

3/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 1/3 cups mashed banana (2 to 3 large bananas)

2/3 cup crushed pineapple, drained (about half of a 20-ounce can)

2/3 cup walnuts or pecans, toasted and chopped

2/3 cup shredded coconut (sweetened or unsweetened will work)

1 1/3 cups granulated sugar

11 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted and cooled

1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract

2 eggs

for the Frosting

12 ounces cream cheese

1/2 cup unsalted butter, at room temperature

1 cup mango puree

1 tablespoon mango extract

5 cups powdered sugar

DIRECTIONS

Make the Dried Pineapple Flowers: Preheat oven to 225F. Line two baking sheets with nonstick baking mats or parchment paper. Cut the top and bottom off the pineapple, and slice off the outer rind. Using a small melon baller or measuring spoon, remove and discard the pineapple "eyes". Use a sharp knife to cut the pineapple crosswise into very thin slices. Place the slices on the baking sheets. Bake until the tops look dried, about 30 minutes. Flip slices; bake until completely dried, 25 to 30 minutes more (or longer, depending on their thickness). Pinch the center of each pineapple slice to shape into a cone; let cool in a clean muffin tin to form flowers. Let sit overnight so that they retain their shape. Once completely dried and shaped, the flowers can be stored (stacked) up to 3 days at room temperature in an airtight container.

Make the Cupcakes: Preheat oven to 350F. Line standard-size muffin tins with paper liners; set aside. Whisk together the flour, baking soda, salt, and cinnamon; set aside. In another bowl, stir together the banana, pineapple, walnuts, and coconut; set aside. With an stand mixer on medium-high speed, beat the butter, sugar, and vanilla until combined. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating until each is incorporated, scraping down the sides of the bowl as needed.

Continue beating until the mixture is pale and fluffy. Add the banana mixture to the egg mixture, beating until combined. Stir in the flour mixture with a rubber spatula. Divide the batter evenly among the lined cups, filling each three-quarters full. Bake, rotating tins halfway through, until golden brown and a cake tester inserted in the centers comes out clean, about 20 minutes. Transfer tins to wire racks to cool completely before removing cupcakes. (Unfrosted cupcakes can be stored up to 3 days at room temperature in airtight containers.)

Make the Frosting: Using the whisk attachment, beat the cream cheese and butter at medium-high speed until light and fluffy, scraping the sides of the bowl as needed, about 5 minutes. Add the mango puree and beat again. Add the mango extract and mix to incorporate. Reduce the speed to medium-low and gradually add the powdered sugar, until it has all been incorporated. Scrape the sides of the bowl and increase the speed to medium-high and whip until light and fluffy, 2 to 3 minutes. To finish, pipe frosting onto the top of each cupcake (or use an offset spatula to spread the frosting) and top with a dried pineapple flower.