

HARVEST MOON CUPCAKES

(SPICED CHOCOLATE CUPCAKES WITH EXTRA-CHOCOLATELY BUTTERCREAM FROSTING AND CHIPOTLE LOLLIPOPS)

INGREDIENTS

For the cupcakes

1 cups boiling water
1/2 cup semisweet chocolate, chopped fine (I use a food processor to make almost a powder)
1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoons baking soda
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup butter, softened
1 cup granulated sugar
3 eggs
2 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon chili powder
1/2 teaspoon cloves

For frosting

1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened
1/4 cup butter, softened
2 1/2 cups confectioners' sugar
1 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/4 teaspoon chili powder
1/4 teaspoon salt

You will also need: orange and yellow sanding sugar and lollipops

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350F. Line a muffin pan with cupcake liners.

In medium bowl, pour boiling water over cocoa, and whisk until smooth. Let mixture cool. Sift together flour, baking soda, baking powder and salt; set aside. In the bowl of a stand mixer, cream butter and sugar together until light and fluffy. Beat in eggs one at time, then stir in vanilla and spices. Add the flour mixture alternately with the cocoa mixture, ending with the flour.

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 18 to 20 minutes. Cool the cupcakes in the pan for 10 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.

To make the frosting: Sift together the confectioners sugar, cocoa powder, salt and chili powder. Beat the cream cheese and butter with an electric mixer in a bowl until smooth. Beat in the cocoa-powdered sugar mixture a little at a time until incorporated. Add the vanilla extract; beat until fluffy. Frost cupcakes and garnish.