

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 a 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.