

S'mores Cupcakes

Ingredients:

For the graham cracker crust:

1½ cups graham cracker crumbs

¼ cup sugar

5 1/3 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

For the cake:

½ cup plus 1 tablespoon Dutch-process cocoa powder

½ cup plus 1 tablespoon hot water

2¼ cups all-purpose flour

¾ teaspoon baking soda

¾ teaspoon baking powder

½ teaspoon salt

2 sticks plus 1 tablespoon unsalted butter

1 2/3 cups sugar

3 large eggs, at room temperature

1 tablespoon vanilla extract

¾ cup sour cream

For the frosting:

4 large egg whites, at room temperature

1 cup sugar

¼ tsp. cream of tartar

1 tsp. vanilla extract

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350° F. Line two cupcake pans with paper liners. In a small mixing bowl, combine the graham cracker crumbs, sugar and melted butter; mix well with a fork. Drop about 1 tablespoon of the graham cracker mixture in the bottom of each cupcake liner and press down to line the bottom. (Note: The bottom of a small cup or bottle works well here.) Bake for 5 minutes. Remove from the oven, and maintain the oven temperature.

In a small bowl, combine the cocoa powder and hot water and whisk until smooth. In another medium bowl combine the flour, baking soda, baking powder, and salt, and whisk to blend. Combine the butter and sugar in a medium saucepan set over medium heat. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the mixture is smooth and the butter is completely melted. Transfer the mixture to the bowl of an electric mixer and beat on medium-low speed until the mixture is cool, about 4-5 minutes. Add the eggs one at a time, mixing well after each addition and scraping down the sides of the bowl as needed. Blend in the vanilla and then the cocoa mixture until smooth. With the mixer on low speed, add the flour mixture in three additions alternating with the sour cream, beginning and ending with the dry ingredients and mixing each addition just until incorporated.

Divide the batter evenly between the prepared liners, filling each about ¾-full. Bake until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, about 15-18 minutes. Let cool in the pan about 5-10 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.

To make the frosting, combine the egg whites, sugar and cream of tartar in a double boiler or bowl set over a pan of a few inches of simmering water. Mix with a hand mixer for 7 minutes while over the simmering water. The frosting will become glossy and form stiff peaks. Transfer the frosting to a pastry bag fitted with a decorative tip. Pipe onto cupcakes and then brown with a torch and garnish with chocolate pieces if desired.

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