

Toffee Crunch Cupcakes

thefarmgirlrecipes.blogspot.com

Note: You need to plan ahead for the frosting and ganache. Make it the frosting the day before or enough ahead of time to account for all the time it takes. If you don't want to use this frosting recipe, use your normal buttercream and add a little bit of caramel to it. The ganache needs to chill for several hours so take that time into account also.

Cupcakes:

- 2 cups sugar
- 1-3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup milk
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 cup boiling water

Ganache and Toffee:

- 10 oz semisweet chocolate, chopped
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 2 tbsp butter
- 2 packages toffee bits

Frosting:

- 1 1/2 cups granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 3 tbsp cornstarch
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1 1/2 cups milk
- 2 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 3 sticks (1 1/2 cups) butter, cut into 24 pieces, softened to room temperature
- 1/3 cup caramel sauce

1. To make the cupcakes, preheat oven to 350°F. Line muffin cups with paper baking cups. Set aside. In a large bowl, stir together sugar, flour, cocoa, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Add eggs, milk, oil and vanilla; your stand mixer, fitted with the whisk attachment, beat on medium speed for 2 minutes. Stir in boiling water. The batter will be quite thin. Fill the muffin cups 2/3 full (don't add more than this because they will spill over) and bake for 18-20 minutes, until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out with moist crumbs. Remove from oven and let

cool completely.

2. To make the frosting, in a medium bowl, combine the sugar, flour, cornstarch and salt. Slowly whisk in the milk until the mixture is smooth. Place a fine-mesh strainer over a medium saucepan and pour the milk mixture through the strainer into the saucepan. Discard anything left in the strainer. Cook the mixture over medium heat, whisking constantly, until the mixture boils and is thick enough that it starts to become difficult to whisk easily. It will take about 5-10 minutes and be considerably thicker.

3. Transfer frosting mixture to a clean bowl and cool to room temperature--very, very important! If it is even slightly warm, the frosting won't beat up properly. You can refrigerate this initial mixture overnight. If you do this, make sure to pull it out in time to let it warm back up to room temperature. If you try to proceed with the rest of the recipe and the mixture is too cold, the butter won't absorb into the frosting like it should.

4. Once the frosting is completely cooled to room temperature, beat the mixture in your stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment. Add the vanilla on low speed until it is well combined, about 30 seconds. Add the butter, one piece at a time, and beat the frosting until all the butter has been incorporated fully, about 2 minutes. Increase the speed to medium-high and let the mixer work its magic. Beat the frosting for five more minutes. It should be very light and fluffy. Fold in the caramel sauce. Let the frosting sit at room temperature until it is a bit more stiff, about 1 hour.

5. For the ganache, place the chopped chocolate in a medium bowl. Heat the cream to a simmer in a small saucepan on your stove. Pour the hot cream over the chocolate and let the mixture sit, without stirring, for 1-2 minutes. Whisk to combine until the chocolate is glossy and smooth. Whisk in butter until the butter is melted and the mixture is smooth. Transfer the bowl to the refrigerator and let the ganache chill until it is at piping consistency, 2-3 hours. It helps to give it a good stir, every 20 minutes or so to help it cool evenly. Don't let it harden too much in the refrigerator or it will be too stiff to pipe (if that happens, just let it sit at room temperature until it is soft again).

6. To assemble the cupcakes, fill a piping bag with the ganache and using a large round circle tip, pipe a ring on the top of the cupcake around the perimeter, leaving an open circle in the center. Pour the toffee bits into a bowl and lightly press the edges of the ganache into the toffee bits, pressing very gently to adhere the toffee to the ganache.

7. Fill another pastry bag ([or use this frosting trick](#)) fitted with a decorative tip with the frosting and pipe a swirl of frosting on top of each cupcake, filling the empty space inside the ganache ring. Refrigerate and let sit at room temperature about an hour before serving. Enjoy!!