Andes Mint Cupcakes

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1 recipe of your favorite chocolate cake*, baked into 24 cupcakes and cooled *completely*

Chocolate Mint Filling:
1 cup semisweet chocolate chips
6 tablespoons heavy cream
2 teaspoons peppermint extract
2/3 cup powdered sugar

Mint Buttercream:
1 cup (2 sticks, 16 tablespoons) butter, softened to room temperature
8 ounces cream cheese, softened to room temperature
2 lbs. powdered sugar
1/2 cup heavy cream
1 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
2 teaspoons peppermint extract
Green food coloring

24 Andes mints for garnish

For the mint filling, place the chocolate chips and heavy cream in a small microwave-safe bowl and heat for 1 minute at 50% power. Stir. Repeat the process until the mixture is smooth. Stir in the peppermint extract and powdered sugar, whisking until smooth. Let the mixture cool to room temperature (but don't let it get too stiff) and pour it into a disposable pastry bag fitted with a

small round tip, or a squeeze bottle with a tip.

Insert the decorating tip or tip of the squeeze bottle into the center of the cupcake and press gently to fill the middle of the cupcake with the mint ganache. You can be pretty generous, squeezing until you see the top of the cupcake start to rise a little. Repeat with the remaining cupcakes.

For the frosting, in a large bowl, beat the cream cheese and butter until light and fluffy. Add the powdered sugar and mix until smooth. Add the heavy cream and peppermint and vanilla extracts. Beat until light and fluffy. Add green food coloring until the color you like is achieved.

Frost the cooled, filled cupcakes with frosting (using a large star tip, I used Wilton # 1M) or simply spread the frosting in a large dollop (again, you can be generous-there is plenty) with a butter knife or flat spatula. Garnish with a drizzle of leftover ganache (make sure the ganache is completely cool or it will melt the frosting when you drizzle it on top of the cupcake), and an unwrapped Andes mint. Serve at room temperature.