

Dream Kitchen \$25,000 SWEEPSTAKES

Make your dream kitchen come to life by entering to win \$25,000!

Go to: BHG.com/CupcakeSweeps



NO PURCHASE NECESSARY TO ENTER OR WIN. Subject to Official Rules available at www.bhg.com/25k online. The \$25,000 Sweepstakes begins a 12:01 a.m. CT on 02/01/16 and ends at 11:59 p.m. CT on 06/30/16. Open to legal residents of the 50 United States, and the District of Columbia, 21 years or older. Void where prohibited. Sponsor: Meredith Corporation. Sweepstakes is offered by Meredith Corporation and may be promoted by any of Meredith's publications in various creative executions online and in print and at additional URLs at any time during the sweepstakes.



CONTENTS

- 12 THE BASICS

 Make it homemade with these classic cupcake and frosting recipes, plus a few extra decorating tips and tricks.
- 22 SODA SHOP CUPCAKES
 Classic ice cream parlor favorites—
 root beer floats, sundaes, banana
 splits—are reimagined as cupcakes.
- 32 CUPCAKE SURPRISE
 They look ordinary on the outside,
 but inside there's a sweet surprise
 worth waiting for.
- 42 BIRTHDAY CUPCAKES

 Kids love cupcakes—especially at birthday time! Customize the design to fit the guest-of-honor's personality.
- 56 SPRING SHOWERS
 Bring some sweet cupcake style to bridal and baby showers this season.

- 72 BAKERY BEAUTIES

 What could possibly be better than lemon meringue pie, cinnamon rolls, and doughnuts? Those top bakery flavors in cupcake form, of course.
- 82 COLOR WHEEL CELEBRATION
 Set out the cupcakes and candies, and
 let the kids decorate their own cupcakes
 at this clever party.
- 88 CELEBRATION FLAVORS
 Even adults love cupcakes! Pick a classy
 flavor for your next office party or other
 grown-up gathering.
- 100 COCKTAILS & CUPCAKES
 Ready, set, relax with these matching
 cupcake and cocktail pairs.
- 108 THE CANDY BAR

 Cupcakes team up with candy bars to create these addictive treats.
- 112 CUPCAKE EXCHANGE
 Friends, good times, and dozens of cupcakes to swap—now that's a party!

- 120 HOLIDAY CUPCAKES

 When you need a holiday treat, these cupcakes are stars! Find the perfect idea for Christmas, Halloween, Easter, Thanksgiving, and more.
- 136 INDEX

PLUS

- 6 CAKE & ICE CREAM CUPCAKES

 A layer of ice cream adds a layer of fun to
 your favorite purchased cupcakes!
- 8 COPYCAT CAKES

 Make delicious homemade versions of packaged snack cakes.
- 10 SPECIAL ORDER

 Help everyone enjoy sweet cakes with these gluten-, egg-, and dairy-free cupcake.





MEREDITH SPECIAL INTEREST MEDIA

Group Editorial Leader DOUG KOUMA
Content Director, Home KARMAN HOTCHKISS
Content Director, Food JENNIFER DARLING

HOME

Group Editor Samantha Hart Senior Editors ann blevins, Katy Kiick Condon, Brian Kramer, Samantha S. Thorpe

SAMAN HA S. I HORPE
Senior Associate Editor MARIA V. CHARBONNEAUX
Senior Associate Art Director KIMBERLY MORGAN METZ
Associate Art Director NICOLE DEAN TEUT
ASSISTANT ART DIRECTOR CHRISTY BROKENS. EMILY PHIPPS. LORI STURDIVANT

FOOD

Executive Editor JAN MILLER
Senior Editor JESSICA SAARI CHRISTENSEN
ASSOCIATE Editor CARRIE BOYD
Senior Associate Art Director STEPHANIE HUNTER
ASSISTANT ART DIRECTOR RACHEL KENNEDY
SETTER HORS AND CONTROL STEPHANIE PROT

Better Homes and Gardens® Test Kitchen Director LYNN BLANCHARD

GARDEN

Group Editor JAMES A. BAGGETT
Assistant Editor RISA QUADE
Senior Associate Art Director NICK CROW
Assistant Art Director JESSICA ENO
Better Homes and Gardens Test Garden® Manager SANDRA GERDES

EDITORIAL ADMINISTRATION

Assistant Managing Editor JENNIFER SPEER RAMUNDT
Senior Copy Editors SHEILA MAUCK, METTA CEDERDAHL WEST
Associate Copy Editor MARTHA COLOFF LONG
Business Manager, Editorial CINDY SLOBASZEWSKI
Contracts and Database Manager MARYANN NORTON
Lead Business Office Assistant GABRIELLE RENSLOW
Business Office Assistant KIM O'BRIEN-WOLETT
Administrative Assistants LORI EGGERS, SUE MILLER, MARLENE TODD
Director, Premedia Services AMY TINCHER-DURIK
Quality Director JOE KOHLER
Director, Meredith Photo Studios BOB FURSTENAU
Photo Studio Set Construction Manager DAVE DECARLO
Photo Studio Business Manager TERRI CHARTER
Prepress Desktop Specialist PATTY SAVAGE
Color Quality Analyst HEIDI PARCEL

BETTER HOMES AND GARDENS

Editor in Chief STEPHEN ORR Executive Editor JILL WAAGE Creative Director JENNIFER MADARA

The Recipe Center at BHG.com/Food contains hundreds of recipes and tips, all tested in the Better Homes and Gardens* Test Kitchen.

If you have comments or questions about the editorial material in this publication, write to the editor of Cupcakes, Meredith Corp., 1716 Locust St., Des Moines, IA 50309-3023. Send e-mail to spoon@meredith.com.

 $\textit{Cupcakes} \ is \ available \ only \ on \ the \ news stand; \ no \ subscriptions \ available.$

Editor JESSICA SAARI CHRISTENSEN
Designers STEPHANIE HUNTER, RACHEL KENNEDY
COPY Editor SHEILA MAUCK
Contributing Designer BRITTANY MUELLER
Contributing Proofreader CARRIE TRUESDELL
Administrative Assistant MARLENE TODD

Contributing Food Stylists KELSEY BULAT, DIANNA NOLIN, JENNIFER PETERSON Contributing Photographers JASON DONNELLY, ANDY LYONS, JACOB FOX Test Kitchen Product Supervisor COLLEEN WEEDEN

ADVERTISING

HOME

Senior Vice President and Group Publisher CHRISTINE GUILFOYLE christine.guilfoyle@meredith.com Associate Publisher TRACY HADEL tracy.hadel@meredith.com

LUXURY HOME PORTFOLIO

Group Publisher BETH McDONOUGH beth.mcdonough@meredith.com
Group Associate Publisher, Marketing STACY SHAPIRO FELDMAN stacyshapiro.feldman@meredith.com
Marketing Assistant SOPHIA THID sophia.thid@meredith.com

FOOD AND HOLIDAY

Group Publisher STEPHEN BOHLINGER stephen.bohlinger@meredith.com Advertising Director MALLORY PARKS mallory.parks@meredith.com Advertising Sales Assistant SHARON TAPLIN sharon.taplin@meredith.com

GARDEN

Vice President and Group Publisher SCOTT MORTIMER scott.mortimer@meredith.com Regional Account Executive CHRIS WOOD chris.wood@meredith.com Regional Account Executive BRIAN KEANE brian.keane@meredith.com

CRAFTS AND DO IT YOURSELF

Vice President and Group Publisher SCOTT MORTIMER scott.mortimer@meredith.com
Advertising Sales Director AMY GATES amy.gates@meredith.com
Advertising Account Manager AMBER DARBY amber.darby@meredith.com
Project Supervisor BETHANY PETERSON bethany.peterson@meredith.com
Business Development Director CURT BLADES curt.blades@meredith.com
Sales Assistant ASHLEY JACOBS ashley.jacobs@meredith.com

ADVERTISING OPERATIONS

1716 Locust St., Des Moines, IA 50309-3023
Senior Production Manager APRIL BRACELIN Production Manager DEBBIE REYNOLDS
Consumer Marketing Director LIZ BREDESON Consumer Marketing Manager BLAINE ROURICK

DIRECT MEDIA

Fax: 212/499-6757

Advertising Director GRACE CHUNG-MUI grace.chung-mui@meredith.com 212/499-6719
Business Development Manager STEPHANIE BARREZUETA stephanie.barrezueta@meredith.com 212/499-6723

Business Development Manager CARA JACOBS cara.jacobs@meredith.com 212/499-6770

NEWSSTAND

JENNIFER HAMILTON

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

Business Director JANICE CROAT Associate Advertising Business Manager EDWARD HAYES Senior Business Manager JENNA BATES Business Manager TONY ROUSE Product Sales HEATHER PROCTOR

Meredith National Media Group

President | TOM HARTY

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENTS President, Parents Network CAREY WITMER

President, Women's Lifestyle THOMAS WITSCHI President, Meredith Digital JON WERTHER Chief Marketing Officer NANCY WEBER Chief Revenue Officer MICHAEL BROWNSTEIN General Manager DOUG OLSON

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENTS

Chief Digital Officer ANDY WILSON Digital Sales MARC ROTHSCHILD Innovation Officer CAROLYN BEKKEDAHL Research Solutions BRITTA CLEVELAND VICE PRESIDENTS

Business Planning and Analysis ROB SILVERSTONE Content Licensing LARRY SOMMERS Corporate Sales BRIAN KIGHTLINGER Digital Video LAURA ROWLEY Direct Media PATTI FOLLO Brand Licensing ELISE CONTARSY Communications PATRICK TAYLOR Human Resources DINA NATHANSON Strategic Sourcing, Newsstand, Production CHUCK HOWELL



Chairman and Chief Executive Officer STEPHEN M. LACY President, Meredith Local Media Group PAUL KARPOWICZ

Vice Chairman | MELL MEREDITH FRAZIER In Memoriam | E. T. MEREDITH III, 1933-2003









I was just a 12-year-old kid when I took my first cake-decorating classes. Forget ballet and soccer—I wanted to spend my free time making buttercream roses and fancy basket-weave cakes. (Keep in mind that it was the '90s, and buttercream roses were the thing.) True confession: Despite three series of these decorating classes, my cakes were never as cool as the ones in the magazines. It's hard work to be perfect.

Now here's the good news: Decorating is a lot simpler these days. I still have and use all my old tools—pastry bags and decorating tips—but the days of buttercream roses and tedious basket weaves are long gone. Now cupcakes are having their day, and the focus is on fantastic flavors and easy designs that anyone can replicate. We created this magazine with the goal of making homemade flavor possible for every celebratory situation in life—baby shower (page 62), wedding shower (page 58), cocktail party (page 100), or cupcake swap (page 112).

And if the children in your life are anything like my 3-year-old, it's not a birthday or holiday bash without sweet themed cupcakes. Cater to your kiddo's personality with customized birthday treats—kitties (page 46), flowers (page 54), or sports balls (page 44)—or blow out the holidays with festive sweets—Halloween ghosts and monsters (page 129), Easter bunnies (page 133), or Fourth of July sparklers (page 135). No matter what the occasion, there's a cupcake for you.

It's time to bake, decorate, and celebrate!

- Juis Chritim





THE SEAL

The Test Kitchen seal assures you that every recipe tested in the Better Homes and Gardens® Test Kitchen is practical and reliable, and meets our high standards of taste appeal.

Welcome! The Better Homes and Gardens® Test Kitchen is a busy place, testing more than 60,000 recipes since it first opened its doors in 1928. In stark comparison to a professional restaurant-style kitchen filled with fancy equipment, the Test Kitchen is actually eight galley-style kitchens outfitted with the same everyday tools and appliances that are in your kitchen at home. And while you might assume the staff who test our recipes are professionally trained chefs dressed in white jackets, the reality is the Better Homes and Gardens culinary specialists are home cooks at heart who cook for their families and friends after spending the day testing recipes for you. The group does have cooking chops, though—collectively, they boast 84 years of food experience and possess a variety of degrees, including food science, culinary arts, consumer science, and dietetics. What unites them is the same mission that began with the very first testers in 1928—a recipe must work in our kitchen so it works in your kitchen, too. We experiment and anticipate any difficulties a home cook might encounter, so our recipes are foolproof. Then

and now, the Better Homes and Gardens Test Kitchen champions a recipe-writing style that leaves nothing to chance.

The Red Plaid Cookbook

Part of our cooking legacy at
Better Homes and Gardens is
the famed red plaid *New Cook*Book (currently in its 16th edition).
This book is at the heart of

everything we do in the Test Kitchen. If we change the method for baking artisan yeast bread, we include it in the next edition. If we test creative new ideas for making a classic recipe better—think lasagna—or when we pick up on up-to-date flavors and trending dishes, we add them to this book. Each edition is made new so it reflects how we cook today.

A SHOPPER

The only way we can test so many recipes each day is with the help of a very key person: the shopper! She makes one enormous shopping list daily for the next day's testing, then heads out to shop major grocery stores and specialty markets.

KITCHEN HELPERS

The Test Kitchen wouldn't function as efficiently without our kitchen helpers. They move through the galley kitchens wrangling dirty dishes, loading dishwashers, and working to keep things as orderly as possible as the testers are cooking away.

WE KNOW NUTRITION

Though our culinary specialists are nutrition-savvy, the Test Kitchen does have a registered dietitian on staff. She answers A LOT of nutrition questions, double-checks recipes with special nutrient parameters, and determines the nutrition analysis for each recipe.





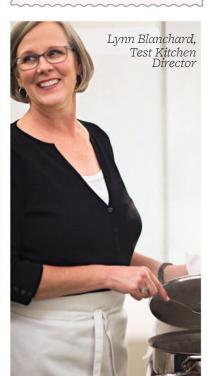




TESTING TRIVIA

Each culinary specialist tests an average of five recipes daily. Here are a few insider tidbits on how we test:

- Measuring flour: Measuring techniques can significantly change the amount of flour in a recipe. When measuring flour in the Test Kitchen, we stir the flour in the container to lighten, spoon it into a measuring cup, then level.
- Eggs: We test with large eggs.
- Milk: When milk is listed as an ingredient, we test with 2-percent (reduced-fat) milk unless otherwise specified.
- Vegetable oil: When vegetable oil is listed as an ingredient, we use neutral oils, such as canola oil or corn oil, unless otherwise specified.
- Butter: We use butter
 in our recipes instead of
 margarine. Although you can
 often substitute margarine
 for butter in cooking, we
 recommend butter in baking
 recipes.





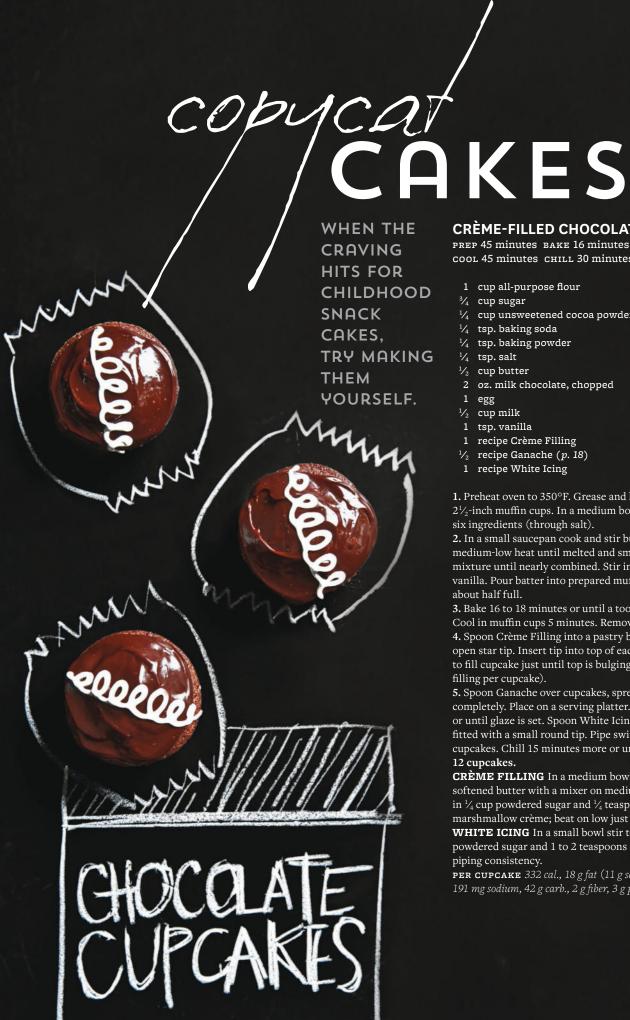


CAKE & ICE CREAM CUPCAHES

SURE, CAKE AND ICE CREAM ARE A GREAT PAIR. BUT HOW ABOUT ICE CREAM TUCKED INTO CAKE? WHEN YOU START WITH PURCHASED BAKERY CUPCOKES, IT'S SO EASY TO ADD FLAVOR AND FUN.







CRÈME-FILLED CHOCOLATE CUPCAKES

PREP 45 minutes BAKE 16 minutes at 350°F COOL 45 minutes CHILL 30 minutes

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1/4 tsp. baking soda
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. baking powder
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- ½ cup butter
- 2 oz. milk chocolate, chopped
- 1 egg
- ½ cup milk
- tsp. vanilla
- recipe Crème Filling
- $\frac{1}{2}$ recipe Ganache (p. 18)
- recipe White Icing
- 1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease and lightly flour twelve $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch muffin cups. In a medium bowl stir together the first six ingredients (through salt).
- 2. In a small saucepan cook and stir butter and chocolate over medium-low heat until melted and smooth. Stir into flour mixture until nearly combined. Stir in egg. Stir in milk and vanilla. Pour batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each about half full.
- **3.** Bake 16 to 18 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool in muffin cups 5 minutes. Remove; cool on a wire rack.
- 4. Spoon Crème Filling into a pastry bag fitted with a medium open star tip. Insert tip into top of each cupcake and squeeze to fill cupcake just until top is bulging (about 2 teaspoons filling per cupcake).
- 5. Spoon Ganache over cupcakes, spreading to cover tops completely. Place on a serving platter. Chill 15 to 30 minutes or until glaze is set. Spoon White Icing into a pastry bag fitted with a small round tip. Pipe swirls across centers of cupcakes. Chill 15 minutes more or until icing is set. Makes 12 cupcakes.

CRÈME FILLING In a medium bowl beat 3 tablespoons softened butter with a mixer on medium until smooth. Beat in \(\frac{1}{4} \) cup powdered sugar and \(\frac{1}{4} \) teaspoon vanilla. Add \(\frac{1}{2} \) cup marshmallow crème; beat on low just until combined.

WHITE ICING In a small bowl stir together 1/3 cup powdered sugar and 1 to 2 teaspoons milk to reach thick piping consistency.

PER CUPCAKE 332 cal., 18 g fat (11 g sat. fat), 55 mg chol., 191 mg sodium, 42 g carb., 2 g fiber, 3 g pro.



CRÈME-FILLED SPONGE

PREP 45 minutes BAKE 9 minutes at 375°F cool 45 minutes

- 3 eggs, room temperature
- ¹∕₃ cup all-purpose flour
- $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. baking powder
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. vanilla
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- ¹/₃ cup granulated sugar
- 3 Tbsp. butter, melted
- 1 7-oz. jar marshmallow crème
- ½ cup shortening
- 1/3 cup powdered sugar
- 1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Grease twelve $4\times1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch cups of a miniature sponge cake pan or twelve $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch muffin

cups. Separate eggs carefully, taking care not to break yolks. In a small bowl stir together flour, baking powder, and $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon of the salt.

- 2. In a medium bowl beat egg yolks and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of the vanilla with a mixer on high 3 to 4 minutes or until thick and lemon color. Gradually add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup granulated sugar, beating until nearly dissolved.
- 3. Wash beaters well. In a large bowl beat egg whites on medium until soft peaks form. Gradually add V_3 cup granulated sugar, beating until stiff peaks form. Gently fold about half of the beaten whites into yolk mixture. Fold yolk mixture into the remaining beaten whites just until combined. Sprinkle with flour mixture; fold in gently. Drizzle with butter; fold in gently. Spoon batter into

prepared cups, filling each about three-fourths full.

- 4. Bake 9 to 11 minutes or until tops spring back when lightly touched. Cool in cups 5 minutes. Remove; cool on a wire rack.
- 5. For filling, in a medium bowl beat marshmallow crème, shortening, the remaining ⅓ teaspoon salt, and the remaining 1 teaspoon vanilla until combined. Beat in powdered sugar. If needed, beat in enough *milk*, 1 tablespoon at a time, to reach piping consistency.
 6. Spoon filling into a pastry bag fitted with a small round tip. Insert tip into bottom of each cake in three places and squeeze to fill cake. Makes 12 cakes.

 PER CAKE 241 cal., 13 g fat (4 g sat. fat), 54 mg chol., 133 mg sodium, 30 g carb., 0 g fiber, 2 g pro.

Special

Don't let food allergies stand in the way

Don't let food allergies stand in the way

a batch of these
of the party. Whip up a batch of these
of the party. Whip up a batch of these
dairy-, egg-, and gluten-free cupcakes
dairy-, egg-, and glutenfor guests with special diets.

SPECIAL VANILLA

AQUA-FABULOUS!

Before you scoff at the idea of meringue made from chickpea liquid (also known as aquafaba), take a moment to read this. It sounds strange, but the liquid drained from a can of cooked chickpeas can actually be whipped up to a frothy, shiny meringue-like mixture that behaves in a way similar to egg whites. When you add a little sugar, there's hardly a difference. Why is this important? For people with egg allergies—or those on vegan diets—this amazing substance can be used to frost cakes, cupcakes, and cookies. And unlike traditional meringue frosting, you don't have to cook it to 160°F to be safe—a tedious task for sure (see page 16). Plus, no refrigeration is required once you frost the cupcakes.

SPECIAL CHOCOLATE CUPCAKES

PREP 20 minutes BAKE 15 minutes at 350°F

- 1½ cups Homemade Gluten-Free Flour Mix or gluten-free all-purpose flour*
 - 1 cup sugar
- ½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 tsp. gluten-free baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt
- 1 cup water
- 1/3 cup coconut oil or canola oil
- 1 Tbsp. white vinegar
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. vanilla
- 1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line twelve $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. In a large bowl combine the first five ingredients (through salt). Add the remaining ingredients; whisk until combined.
- 2. Spoon batter into prepared cups, filling each about three-fourths full. Bake 15 to 18 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool cupcakes in pans 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pans; cool on wire racks. Makes 12 cupcakes.

HOMEMADE GLUTEN-FREE

white rice flour, 3 cups potato starch, 2 cups sorghum flour, and 4 teaspoons xanthan gum. Cover and store any leftover mixture in an airtight container at room temperature up 3 months.

*TIP Look for gluten-free flour mixes with baking supplies at large grocery stores or natural foods stores. Some common brands are King Arthur Flour, Domata, and Cup4Cup.

PER CUPCAKE 199 cal., 7 g fat (6 g sat. fat), 0 mg chol., 209 mg sodium, 35 g carb., 2 g fiber, 1 g pro.

SPECIAL VANILLA CUPCAKES

Prepare as directed, except use 2 cups gluten-free flour mix and omit cocoa powder. Add 1 tablespoon flaxseed meal to flour mixture. Omit water and measure 1 cup unsweetened almond milk. Add vinegar to almond milk; let stand 5 minutes. Increase vanilla to 2 teaspoons and add ½ teaspoon almond extract with the vanilla.

PER CUPCAKE 221 cal., 7 g fat (5 g sat. fat), 0 mg chol., 224 mg sodium, 39 g carb., 1 g fiber, 1 g pro.

SURPRISE! MERINGUE FROSTING

START TO FINISH 15 minutes

- 1 15-oz. can chickpeas (garbanzo beans)
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1. Drain liquid from chickpeas, reserving liquid. (Cover and refrigerate beans for another use.) Measure ½ cup bean liquid (discard remaining liquid or save for another use). In a medium bowl beat bean liquid with a mixer on high until soft peaks form (tips curl). Gradually add sugar, 1 tablespoon at a time, beating on high until glossy and stiff peaks form (tips stand straight). Beat in vanilla. Makes 1½ cups.

PER $1\frac{1}{2}$ TABLESPOONS 35 cal., 8 g fat (0 g sat. fat), 0 mg chol., 53 mg sodium, 0 g carb., 0 g fiber, 0 g pro.

HOW TO MAKE THE FROSTING



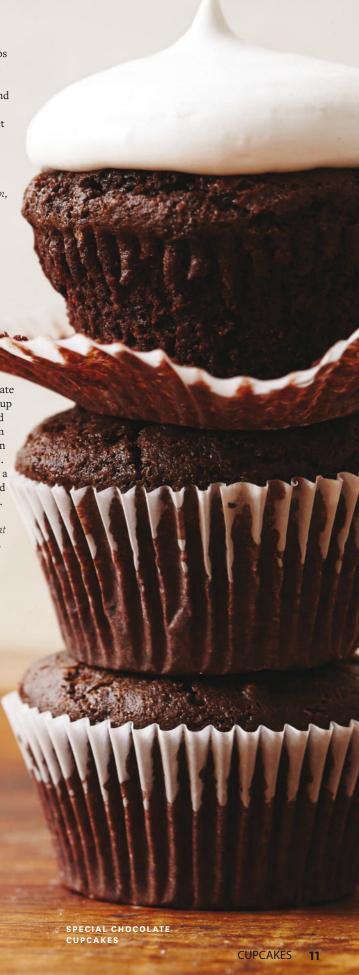
Drain the chickpeas to separate the liquid from the beans. Measure the amount of liquid you need; reserve or discard the rest.



Beat the liquid with a mixer until it is frothy and white, holding soft peaks.



While beating, gradually add in the sugar. Beat the mixture until it holds stiff peaks. It's magic!







BEAUTIFUL DECORATING IS ONLY HALF OF THE CUPCAKE EQUATION. THESE DELICIOUS HOMEMADE RECIPES ARE THE BASIC BUILDING BLOCKS THAT WILL YIELD FABULOUS RESULTS, BOTH INSIDE AND OUT.





THE CUSTOM CUPCAKE

Here are some fun ways to tweak these basic cupcakes (or a cake mix) to come up with something new:

- To spice up the batter, stir in 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon, ground ginger, pumpkin pie spice, or apple pie spice.
- Add a little liquid flavoring by replacing ¼ cup of the milk or water called for in the recipe or the cake mix with ¼ cup flavored liqueur, fruit juice, or melted ice cream.
- After filling bake cups with batter, top the batter in each cup with a few dried cranberries or cherries, or sprinkle with chopped nuts or shredded coconut.
- After baking, lightly sprinkle hot cupcakes with chocolate, butterscotch, or peanut butter pieces; chopped chocolate-covered raisins or peanuts; or chopped candy bars or caramels.

YELLOW CUPCAKES

PREP 45 minutes

BAKE 18 minutes at 350°F

COOL 45 minutes

- $2^{1}/_{2}$ cups all-purpose flour
- $2\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt
- 3/4 cup butter, softened
- 1³/₄ cups sugar
- 3 eggs, room temperature
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. vanilla
- $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups milk
- 1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line twenty-four to thirty $2^{1}/_{2}$ -inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. In a medium bowl stir together the first three ingredients (through salt); set aside.
- 2. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Gradually beat in sugar, ½ cup at a time, until combined. Scrape sides of bowl; beat 2 minutes more. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each. Beat in vanilla. Alternately add flour mixture and milk to butter mixture, beating on low after each just until combined. Spoon batter into the prepared muffin cups, filling each about two-thirds full.
- **3.** Bake 18 to 22 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool cupcakes in muffin cups 5 minutes. Remove from pan; cool completely on a wire rack. Frost with desired frosting. **Makes 24 to 30 cupcakes.**

CITRUS YELLOW CUPCAKES Prepare as directed, except stir 2 teaspoons finely shredded orange peel or lemon peel into the batter.

PER CUPCAKE 171 cal., 7 g fat (4 g sat. fat), 43 mg chol., 129 mg sodium, 25 g carb., 0 g fiber, 3 g pro.





CHOCOLATE CUPCAKES

PREP 50 minutes

BAKE 18 minutes at 350°F

COOL 45 minutes

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 3/4 tsp. baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt
- 3/4 cup butter, softened
- 2 cups sugar
- 3 eggs, room temperature
- 2 tsp. vanilla
- 11/2 cups milk
- 1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line twenty-four to thirty $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. In a medium bowl stir together the first five ingredients (through salt); set aside.
- 2. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Gradually beat in sugar, ½ cup at a time, until combined. Scrape sides of bowl; beat 2 minutes more. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each. Beat in vanilla. Alternately add flour mixture and milk to butter mixture, beating on low after each just until combined. Beat 20 seconds more. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each about two-thirds full.
- 3. Bake 18 to 22 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool cupcakes in muffin cups 5 minutes. Remove from pan; cool completely on a wire rack. Frost with desired frosting. Makes 24 to 30 cupcakes.

PER CUPCAKE 177 cal., 7 g fat (4 g sat. fat), 43 mg chol., 165 mg sodium, 27 g carb., 1 g fiber, 3 g pro.

VANILLA CUPCAKES

PREP 50 minutes

BAKE 20 minutes at 350°F

COOL 45 minutes

- 1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise, or 1 tsp. vanilla
- 11/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 11/2 tsp. baking powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. salt
- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 egg, room temperature
- 2 egg yolks, room temperature
- ½ tsp. vanilla
- ½ cup whipping cream
- 1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line twelve $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. If using vanilla bean, use a small knife to scrape the seeds from the bean; set seeds aside. In a small bowl combine flour, baking powder, and salt.
- 2. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Add sugar; beat 1 minute more. Scrape sides of bowl; add egg, egg yolks, vanilla bean seeds (or the 1 teaspoon vanilla), and the ½ teaspoon vanilla. Beat until combined. Alternately add flour mixture and whipping cream to butter mixture, beating on low after each just until combined. Spoon into prepared muffin cups, filling each about two-thirds full.
- 3. Bake 20 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool cupcakes in muffin cups 5 minutes. Remove from pan; cool completely on a wire rack. Frost with desired frosting. Makes 12 cupcakes.

PER CUPCAKE 224 cal., 13 g fat (8 g sat. fat), 87 mg chol., 144 mg sodium, 25 g carb., 0 g fiber, 3 g pro.



CLASSIC BUTTERCREAM

PREP 20 minutes COOL 10 minutes

- 1 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup water
- egg yolks, lightly beaten
- 2 Tbsp. desired liqueur or water
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. vanilla
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups unsalted butter, softened
- 1. In a heavy medium saucepan combine sugar and the water. Bring to boiling; remove from heat. Gradually whisk about half of the hot sugar mixture into egg yolks. Gradually whisk egg yolk mixture into the remaining sugar mixture in saucepan. Bring to a gentle boil; reduce heat. Cook and stir 2 minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in liqueur and vanilla. 2. Transfer yolk mixture to a bowl. Fill a larger bowl with cold water and ice. Place the smaller bowl into the larger bowl. Stir frequently 10 minutes or until mixture is cooled to room temperature.
- 3. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on high until fluffy. Add cooled sugar mixture, beating until combined. If necessary, chill until mixture reaches spreading consistency. Makes 3 cups.

CLASSIC CHOCOLATE **BUTTERCREAM** Prepare as directed, except melt 4 ounces chopped semisweet or bittersweet chocolate; cool. Add chocolate to butter with the sugar mixture.

PER 3 TABLESPOONS 77 cal., 6 g fat (4 g sat. fat), 41 mg chol., 2 mg sodium, 5 g carb, 0 g fiber, 0 g pro.

- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. vanilla
- ½ tsp. almond extract
- 1 lb. powdered sugar (about 4 cups)
- 3 to 4 Tbsp. milk

1. In a large bowl beat shortening, vanilla, and almond extract with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Gradually add about half of the powdered sugar, beating well. Beat in 2 tablespoons of the milk. Gradually beat in the remaining powdered sugar and enough of the remaining milk to reach spreading consistency. Makes 3 cups.

PER 3 TABLESPOONS 223 cal., 12 g fat (3 g sat. fat), 0 mg chol., 2 mg sodium, 29 g carb., 0 g fiber, 0 g pro.

MERINGUE FROSTING

START TO FINISH 25 minutes

- 11/2 cups sugar
- 1/3 cup cold water
- 2 egg whites
- 1/4 tsp. cream of tartar
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1. In the top of a 3-quart double boiler combine sugar, the water, egg whites, and cream of tartar. Beat with a mixer on low 30 seconds.
- 2. Place the pan over boiling water (upper pan should not touch the water). Cook, beating constantly with the mixer on high, 10 to 13 minutes or until an instant-read thermometer inserted in the mixture registers 160°F, stopping mixer and quickly scraping bottom and sides of pan every 5 minutes to prevent sticking. Remove

frosted cupcakes in the refrigerator and serve the same day frosting is made. Makes 5 cups.

PER $\frac{1}{3}$ CUP 101 cal., 0 g fat, 0 mg chol., 9 mg sodium, 25 g carb., 0 g fiber, 1 g pro.

SWEETENED WHIPPED **CREAM FROSTING**

START TO FINISH 25 minutes

- 2 Tbsp. cold water
- tsp. unflavored gelatin
- cups whipping cream
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1. In a large saucepan bring 1 inch water to boiling over high heat. Meanwhile, in a 1-cup heatproof glass measuring cup, combine the 2 tablespoons cold water and the gelatin. Let stand 2 minutes. Place measuring cup in the saucepan of boiling water. Cook and stir about 1 minute or until gelatin is completely dissolved. Remove measuring cup from water; cool 5 minutes.
- 2. In a chilled large bowl beat whipping cream and sugar with chilled beaters of a mixer on medium while gradually drizzling gelatin mixture into cream mixture. Continue beating cream mixture until stiff peaks form (tips stand straight). Makes 4 cups. PER $\frac{1}{3}$ CUP 29 cal., 3 g fat (2 g sat. fat),

10 mg chol., 3 mg sodium, 1 g carb., 0 g fiber, 0 g pro.



CREAM CHEESE FROSTING

START TO FINISH 20 minutes

- 1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter, softened
- 2 tsp. vanilla
- $5\frac{1}{2}$ to 6 cups powdered sugar

1. In a bowl beat cream cheese, butter, and vanilla with a mixer on medium until light and fluffy. Gradually beat in powdered sugar to reach spreading consistency. Store frosted cupcakes in the refrigerator. Makes $3\frac{1}{2}$ cups.

COCOA-CREAM CHEESE

FROSTING Prepare as directed, except beat 1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder into the cream cheese mixture and reduce powdered sugar to 5 to $5\frac{1}{2}$ cups.

PER 3 TABLESPOONS 224 cal., 9 g fat (6 g sat. fat), 26 mg chol., 75 mg sodium, 36 g carb., 0 g fiber, 1 g pro.

- 2 tsp. vanilla
- Food coloring (optional)

1. In an extra-large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium until smooth. Gradually add 2 cups of the powdered sugar, beating well. Gradually beat in 1/3 cup milk and vanilla. Gradually beat in the remaining powdered sugar until smooth. Beat in enough additional milk to reach spreading consistency. If desired, tint with food coloring. Makes 4½ cups.

CITRUS BUTTER FROSTING

Substitute lemon juice or orange juice for the milk and add 1/2 teaspoon finely shredded lemon peel or orange peel.

CHOCOLATE BUTTER FROSTING

Substitute 1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder for ½ cup of the powdered sugar.

COFFEE BUTTER FROSTING Add

1 tablespoon instant espresso coffee powder or coffee crystals with the powdered sugar or substitute strong brewed coffee for the milk.

PEPPERMINT BUTTER

FROSTING Substitute ½ teaspoon peppermint extract for the vanilla and tint the frosting pink with red food coloring.

ALMOND BUTTER FROSTING

Substitute ½ teaspoon almond extract for the vanilla.

PER 3 TABLESPOONS 200 cal., 6 g fat (4 g sat. fat), 15 mg chol., 43 mg sodium, 38 g carb., 0 g fiber, 0 g pro.



BUTTER FROSTING



PRODUCTS + TOOLS

When it comes to cool cupcake tools and products, the sky's the limit. But here are a few of our favorites. For the best assortment of tools, colors, and decorations, check out a supercenter's hobby section or visit the cakedecorating department of hobby and crafts stores.

COLORED CANDY COATING DISKS

These colored disks melt to a smooth consistency then firm up when cool to create a perfect coating and decorating product.

FOOD COLORING

Food colorings comes in paste, gel, and liquid varieties (see *below*). Paste and gel colorings are available in a wider range of colors and won't thin your icings.







WHIPPED SOUR CREAM FROSTING

START TO FINISH 15 minutes

- 2 cups whipping cream
- ½ cup sour cream
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla

1. In a chilled medium bowl beat whipping cream, sour cream, sugar, and vanilla with a mixer on medium-high until medium-stiff peaks form (tips stand almost straight). Store frosted cupcakes in the refrigerator and serve the same day the frosting is made.

Makes about 4 cups.

PER $\frac{1}{4}$ CUP 124 cal., 12 g fat, (7 g sat. fat), 43 mg chol., 15 mg sodium, 4 g carb., 0 g fiber, 1 g pro.

GANACHE

START TO FINISH 30 minutes

- 12 oz. semisweet, bittersweet, or milk chocolate, chopped
- 1 cup whipping cream
- 1. Place chocolate in a medium bowl. In a medium saucepan bring whipping cream just to boiling over medium-high heat. Pour cream over chocolate (do not stir). Let stand 5 minutes. Stir until smooth. Cool 15 minutes or chill up to 1 hour until ganache reaches desired consistency. Makes about 2 cups. PER 3 TABLESPOONS 220 cal., 16 g fat (10 g sat. fat), 34 mg chol., 36 mg sodium, 17 g carb., 0 g fiber, 3 g pro.

EASY HOMEMADE FONDANT

Homemade fondant is softer and easier to work with than store-bought fondant. Just use plenty of powdered sugar on the work surface to prevent sticking when rolling out.

START TO FINISH 25 minutes

- 3 cups tiny marshmallows
- oz. white baking chocolate with cocoa butter, finely chopped
- 1 Tbsp. butter, cut up
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. milk or whipping cream
 - 1 tsp. clear vanilla*
 - 3 cups powdered sugar Paste food coloring (optional)

1. In a microwave-safe bowl combine marshmallows, white chocolate, butter, and milk. Microwave about 1 minute or until marshmallows begin to melt and are puffy. Stir marshmallow mixture until smooth (if necessary, microwave mixture again to continue melting). 2. Stir vanilla into marshmallow mixture. Stir in $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups of the powdered sugar until combined. 3. Sprinkle a work surface with about ½ cup of the remaining powdered sugar; scrape marshmallow mixture onto powdered sugar and begin kneading. Sprinkle with additional powdered sugar as needed, kneading until fondant is smooth and no longer sticky (this will take about 10 minutes). 4. If desired, knead food coloring into fondant.** To use, shape fondant with your hands or roll fondant on a surface coated with additional powdered sugar. If working with the fondant a portion at a time, keep remaining portions tightly covered with plastic wrap. Makes 1 pound.

*TIP Clear vanilla can be found in the cake-decorating department of many hobby and crafts stores.

**TIP If you like, wear plastic gloves to keep from discoloring your hands.

PER 1 OUNCE 137 cal., 1 g fat (1 g sat. fat), 2 mg chol., 20 mg sodium, 32 g carb., 0 g fiber, 0 g pro.

SPRINKLES

These days, cake decorations come in an endless array of colors, textures, shapes, and sizes. Here's the lingo to know.

COARSE SUGARS

Use these lovely tinted sugars for accenting or highlighting different areas on your cupcakes. For special effect, match your frosting and sugar colors.

NONPAREILS

They may have a funny name (meaning "without equal" in French), but they've withstood the test of time in cake-decorating circles. Sprinkle them on lightly for contrast or heavily for emphasis.



JIMMIES

Whether you call these sprinkles or jimmies, the effect is the same—pure deliciousness atop your cake. Use them as accents or as the feature decoration.



For best selection and seasonal choices, visit the cake-decorating department of hobby and crafts stores, or check out wilton.com or fancyflours.com.



FINISHING TOUCHES

Piping frosting from a pastry bag is much easier than you might think with these basic tips. Practice your technique on waxed paper before trying it on your cupcakes.

CLOSED STAR

This tip has tines that curve in more than those of an open star tip (*below*) and is used to create stars, shell borders, and rosettes with deeper, more pronounced grooves.



LARGE ROUND

Create large dots for borders or decoration with this tip. As a substitute, you can place frosting in a large heavy-duty resealable plastic bag and snip off a corner.



MULTI-OPENING (OR GRASS)

This tip is indispensable for creating green grass, lions' manes (page 48), or other types of hair or fur.



OPEN STAR

Star tips (both open and closed) come in a variety of sizes. Small and medium tips can be used to create stars and shell borders, while large tips can create the classic cupcake swirl (page 24).



RIBBON

The ribbon tip can create a smooth or grooved band for borders and lines, depending on which side you have up. It also creates the classic basket-weave design.



LEAF

This tip creates grooved and tapered leaves when given a short squeeze of the decorating bag. You can also create grooved lines and borders with continuous piping.



PETAL

While this tip creates the classic the 3-D frosting rose, we prefer to use it for thick outlines, squiggles, and ruffles (page 70).



SMALL ROUND

This tip is good for small dots, outlining, and writing. You can create the same effect by placing frosting in a large heavy-duty resealable plastic bag and snipping off a small corner.





LOVE MAGAZINES? share your thoughts

Join our Magazine Advisers Community and let us know what you think about our **cooking**, **decorating**, **remodeling**, **gardening**, and **holiday** issues. You will get exclusive previews and a chance to tell us how we can make our content even better. It takes only a few minutes to see if you qualify, and as a special thank-you, you can enter for a chance to win \$10,000*. Plus, as you participate in future surveys, you'll be eligible for other prizes.



Get started today at magazine-advisers.com

PLUS ENTER FOR A CHANCE TO WIN \$10,000

CAKES

TRENDY IS OFTEN TRUMPED BY NOSTALGIA-ESPECIALLY WHEN IT BRINGS BACK THE COMFORT OF OLD-TIME ICE CREAM PARLORS. TRY THESE CREATIONS STARRING PARLOR MENU FAVORITES SUCH AS SHAKES, SPLITS, AND FLOATS.





CONE PROP

To bake cupcake cones in a muffin pan, nestle the base of each cone in foil and place in a muffin cup. Bake 20 to 25 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean.

NEAPOLITAN CUPCAKE CONES

PREP 45 minutes BAKE 18 minutes at 350°F

cool 45 minutes

26 to 32 ice cream cones with flat bottoms

1 pkg. 2-layer-size white cake mix

 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. vanilla

- 1 oz. semisweet or bittersweet chocolate, melted
- 1 Tbsp. unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1/4 cup strawberry preserves
- Red food coloring
- 1 recipe Creamy White Frosting (p. 16) or two 16-oz. cans creamy white frosting
- Desired-color paste food coloring
- 1 cup Chocolate Butter Frosting (p. 17) or canned chocolate frosting
- Jimmies, sprinkles, nonpareils, and/or maraschino cherries (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Place cones in a cone holder (tip,

opposite) or prop up in a muffin pan with foil (tip, left).2. Prepare batter for cake mix according to package

directions. Divide batter evenly among three bowls. Stir

the bottom of each ice cream cone. Add 2 rounded teaspoons of the chocolate batter to each cone. Top each with 2 rounded teaspoons of the vanilla batter; let batter settle in cones.*

4. Bake 18 to 20 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool completely in muffin cups on wire racks. (If baking cones in batches, refrigerate batter in between batches.)

5. Divide Creamy White Frosting between two bowls. Tint one bowl of frosting using paste food coloring. Fill separate

3. Spoon 2 rounded teaspoons of the strawberry batter into

5. Divide Creamy White Frosting between two bowls. Tint one bowl of frosting using paste food coloring. Fill separate pastry bags fitted with large star or round tips with white frosting, tinted frosting, and Chocolate Butter Frosting. (For twist cones, spoon white or tinted frosting and chocolate frosting side by side into a pastry bag). Pipe frostings onto tops of cupcakes to resemble soft-serve ice cream. If desired, top with jimmies, sprinkles, nonpareils, and/or maraschino cherries. **Makes 26 to 32 cupcake cones.**

*TIP Try baking one batter-filled cone as a test to determine the right amount of batter. Generally, each cone will hold between 2 and 3 tablespoons batter total, so you may need to adjust according to your preference.

PER CUPCAKE GONE 298 cal., 12 g fat (3 g sat. fat), 3 mg chol., 158 mg sodium, 47 g carb., 1 g fiber, 1 g pro.





JUST CUPCAKES

CONE HOLDER

If you bake cupcake cones often, a sturdy holder is a good investment. It holds the cones in place while baking, decorating, and serving. Nifty Cupcake Cone Baking Rack available at kohls.com (\$7.99).







EASY SWIRL

To easily get three colors in one frosting swirl, try the Wilton ColorSwirl 3-Color Coupler. Each icing goes into a separate pastry bag and is attached to one large tip with this handy coupler. Just note that you have to buy the large pastry tip separately (specific ones fit the coupler, such as 1M or 2C). Available at hobby and crafts stores or at wilton.com (\$3.99).









HOT FUDGE SUNDAE CUPCAKES

PREP 40 minutes

BAKE 16 minutes at 350°F

COOL 45 minutes

- 1 pkg. 2-layer-size chocolate cake
- 1 12-oz. jar hot fudge ice cream topping, room temperature
- 1 to two 16-oz. cans creamy white frosting
- ½ cup semisweet chocolate pieces*
- 1 tsp. shortening*
- Chopped nuts
- 1 10-oz. jar maraschino cherries with stems, well drained
- 1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line twentyfour 2½-inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. Prepare cake mix according to package directions.
- 2. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each about two-thirds full. Use the back of a spoon to smooth out batter in cups. Place a scant tablespoon fudge topping on the top center of each cupcake.
- 3. Bake 16 to 20 minutes or until tops spring back when lightly touched. Cool cupcakes in pans 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pans; cool on wire racks.
- 4. Spread some of the frosting onto tops of cupcakes. Place the remaining frosting in a pastry bag fitted with a star tip.
- 5. In a small saucepan melt chocolate pieces and shortening over low heat; cool slightly. Spoon melted chocolate into a small heavy resealable plastic bag. Snip off a small piece from one corner of bag. Drizzle melted chocolate on top of frosted cupcakes.
- **6.** Sprinkle cupcakes with nuts. Pipe the remaining frosting onto cupcakes. Place a cherry on top of each cupcake. **Makes 24 cupcakes.**
- *TEST KITCHEN TIP If desired, use Smucker's Magic Shell instead of melting the semisweet chocolate pieces and shortening.

PER CUPCAKE 291 cal., 11 g fat (4 g sat. fat), 27 mg chol., 220 mg sodium, 46 g carb., 1 g fiber, 3 g pro.

SHAMROCK MILK SHAKE CUPCAKES

PREP 50 minutes BAKE 15 minutes at 350°F COOL 45 minutes

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt
- 1 cup buttermilk or sour milk (tip, p. 37)
- 1/4 cup green crème de menthe
- ½ cup shortening
- 13/4 cups sugar
 - 4 egg whites, room temperature
 - 1 tsp. vanilla
 - 1 recipe White Chocolate Frosting
 - Green food coloring
- 1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line twenty 2½-inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. Combine the first four ingredients (through salt). In a 2-cup glass measuring cup combine buttermilk and crème de menthe.

2. In a large bowl beat shortening with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Gradually add sugar, about 1/4 cup at a time, beating on medium until combined. Scrape bowl; beat 2 minutes more. Add egg whites, one at a time, beating after each. Beat in vanilla. Add flour mixture and buttermilk alternately, beating on low after each until well combined. 3. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each about two-thirds full. 4. Bake 15 to 18 minutes or until tops spring back when lightly touched. Cool cupcakes in pans 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pans; cool on wire racks. 5. Divide White Chocolate Frosting between two bowls. Tint one portion with green food coloring. Spoon each frosting into a separate pastry

bag fitted with a large star tip. Pipe

Makes 20 cupcakes.

white and green frostings onto tops of

cupcakes to resemble four-leaf clovers.

WHITE CHOCOLATE FROSTING

Place 6 ounces chopped white baking chocolate with cocoa butter in a large bowl. In a small saucepan heat 1/3 cup heavy cream just until simmering. Pour over white chocolate (do not stir). Let stand 5 minutes. Stir until smooth. Cool 15 minutes. Gradually add 1 cup softened and cut-up butter to white chocolate mixture, beating with a mixer on medium until combined. Gradually beat in 11/2 to 2 cups powdered sugar until frosting reaches piping or spreading consistency. PER CUPCAKE 358 cal., 18 g fat (10 g sat. fat), 32 mg chol., 208 mg sodium, 43 g carb., 0 g fiber, 3 g pro.



QUICK

If you prefer not to use crème de menthe, substitute a mixture of ¼ cup milk, 1 teaspoon mint extract, and several drops green food coloring.

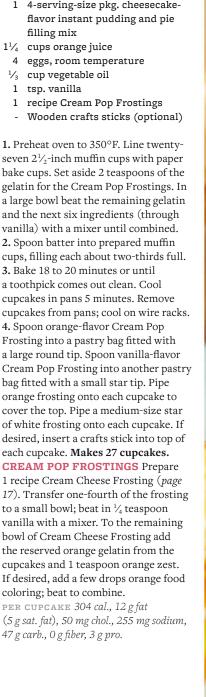
ORANGE CREAM POP CUPCAKES

PREP 40 minutes BAKE 18 minutes at 350°F COOL 45 minutes

- 1 3-oz. pkg. orange-flavor gelatin
- 1 pkg. 2-layer-size white cake mix
- 1 4-serving-size pkg. cheesecakeflavor instant pudding and pie filling mix
- 11/4 cups orange juice
- 4 eggs, room temperature
- 1/3 cup vegetable oil
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 recipe Cream Pop Frostings
- Wooden crafts sticks (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line twentyseven 2½-inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. Set aside 2 teaspoons of the gelatin for the Cream Pop Frostings. In a large bowl beat the remaining gelatin and the next six ingredients (through vanilla) with a mixer until combined. **2.** Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each about two-thirds full. 3. Bake 18 to 20 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool cupcakes in pans 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pans; cool on wire racks. 4. Spoon orange-flavor Cream Pop Frosting into a pastry bag fitted with a large round tip. Spoon vanilla-flavor Cream Pop Frosting into another pastry bag fitted with a small star tip. Pipe orange frosting onto each cupcake to cover the top. Pipe a medium-size star of white frosting onto each cupcake. If desired, insert a crafts stick into top of each cupcake. Makes 27 cupcakes. **CREAM POP FROSTINGS** Prepare 1 recipe Cream Cheese Frosting (page 17). Transfer one-fourth of the frosting to a small bowl; beat in ½ teaspoon vanilla with a mixer. To the remaining bowl of Cream Cheese Frosting add the reserved orange gelatin from the cupcakes and 1 teaspoon orange zest. If desired, add a few drops orange food coloring; beat to combine.

47 g carb., 0 g fiber, 3 g pro.





COOL IT

If you don't have enough muffin

cups or if all the cupcakes do not

fit in the oven at

remaining batter

in the refrigerator

once, store the

while the first

batch bakes.





CREAM SODA-TOFFEE **CUPCAKES**

PREP 30 minutes

BAKE 18 minutes at 350°F

COOL 45 minutes

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. baking powder
- 1/2 tsp. baking soda
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. salt
- ½ cup buttermilk
- cup cream soda (not diet)
- cup butter, softened
- cup granulated sugar
- cup packed brown sugar
- eggs, room temperature
- Tbsp. molasses
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. vanilla
- 1/2 cup almond toffee bits
- 1 recipe Browned-Butter Frosting

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line eighteen $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. Combine the first four ingredients (through salt). In a 2-cup glass measure combine buttermilk and cream soda. 2. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Add sugars, ½ cup at a time, beating on medium until combined. Scrape bowl; beat 2 minutes more. Add eggs, one at a time, beating after each. Beat in molasses and vanilla.

- 3. Add flour mixture and buttermilk mixture alternately, beating on low after each until well combined. Stir in the $\frac{1}{2}$ cup toffee bits. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each about three-fourths full.
- 4. Bake 18 minutes or until tops spring back when lightly touched. Cool cupcakes in pans 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pans; cool on wire racks. Frost tops of cupcakes with Browned-Butter Frosting. Place additional toffee bits on a small plate. Roll frosted edges of cupcakes in toffee bits to coat. Makes 18 cupcakes.

BROWNED-BUTTER FROSTING In a small saucepan heat 1/4 cup butter over medium-low heat about 8 minutes or until butter turns a light golden brown; cool. In a bowl beat 1/4 cup softened butter with a mixer 30 seconds. Beat in browned butter until combined. Add 2 cups powdered sugar, ½ teaspoon vanilla, 1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg, and dash salt, beating well. Beat in 1 to 2 tablespoons buttermilk to make frosting spreading consistency. Use immediately. If frosting starts to set up, stir in a small amount of boiling water. PER CUPCAKE 307 cal., 14 g fat (8 g sat. fat), 69 mg chol., 241 mg sodium, 42 g carb., 0 g fiber, 3 g pro.



RICH, DECADENT CUPCAKES ARE MADE EVEN MORE LAVISH
WITH BAKED-IN CREAMY CENTERS, FABULOUS FILLINGS, AND FLUFFY
LAYERS OF GOODNESS. FOR THESE SWEET CAKES,
THE MARVEL IS HIDDEN IN THE MIDDLE.





TINY CHOCOLATE-CHERRY BOMBS

PREP 35 minutes

BAKE 18 minutes at 350°F

COOL 45 minutes

- 2 10-oz. jars maraschino cherries with stems
- 11/4 cups all-purpose flour
 - 1 cup granulated sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- ½ tsp. baking powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. salt
- ²/₃ cup milk
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup butter, melted and cooled, or canola oil
- 2 Tbsp. Kirsch, other cherry brandy, cherry juice, or milk
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. vanilla
 - 1 egg
 - 1 cup powdered sugar
- 1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line fifty-five 1¾-inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. Drain cherries, reserving 2 tablespoons of the juice. Set aside.
- 2. In a large bowl combine the next six ingredients (through salt). Add the next four ingredients (through vanilla). Beat with a mixer on low until combined. Beat on medium 2 minutes. Add egg; beat 2 minutes more.
- 3. Spoon 1 tablespoon of the batter into each prepared muffin cup. Push a cherry into batter in each cup, keeping stem end up.*
- 4. Bake 18 to 20 minutes or until tops spring back when lightly touched. Cool cupcakes in pans 10 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pans; cool on wire racks.
- 5. Combine powdered sugar and 1 tablespoon of the reserved cherry juice. Add enough additional reserved cherry juice, 1 teaspoon at a time, to make icing drizzling consistency. Drizzle over cupcakes. Let stand until set. Makes 55 cupcakes.
- *TIP If you run out of cherries, add an extra tablespoon of batter to cups for plain cupcakes.

PER CUPCAKE 66 cal., 1 g fat (1 g sat. fat), 7 mg chol., 36 mg sodium, 13 g carb., 1 g fiber, 1 g pro.







CANNOLI CUPCAKES

PREP 45 minutes

BAKE 15 minutes at 350°F

COOL 45 minutes

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- tsp. baking powder
- tsp. salt
- tsp. baking soda
- cup butter, softened
- cups sugar
 - egg whites, room temperature
- tsp. vanilla
- 1 cup buttermilk or sour milk (tip, p. 37)
- 3/4 cup miniature semisweet chocolate pieces
- 1 recipe Ricotta Frosting
- ½ cup chopped pistachio nuts
- 2 Tbsp. grated chocolate

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line twentyfour $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. Combine the first four ingredients (through baking soda). 2. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Gradually add sugar, 1/4 cup at a time, beating on medium until combined. Scrape bowl; beat 2 minutes more. Add egg whites, one at a time, beating well after each. Beat in vanilla. Add flour mixture and buttermilk alternately, beating on low after each until well combined. (Batter may appear curdled.) Fold in chocolate pieces.

3. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each about two-thirds full. Bake 15 to 18 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool cupcakes in pans 10 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pans; cool on wire racks. 4. Just before serving, spoon Ricotta Frosting into a pastry bag fitted with a

large round tip. Insert tip into the top of each cupcake; squeeze some of the frosting into the center of each cupcake. Generously pipe remaining frosting onto tops of cupcakes. Sprinkle with pistachio nuts and grated chocolate. Store loosely covered in the refrigerator. Makes 24 cupcakes.

RICOTTA FROSTING In a large bowl beat 1 cup softened butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Beat in 1 teaspoon vanilla and dash salt. Gradually add 4 cups powdered sugar, beating well. Beat in ½ cup ricotta cheese. Beat in 4 cups additional powdered sugar. Beat in 2 tablespoons milk until frosting is light and fluffy and reaches piping consistency. PER CUPCAKE 420 cal., 16 g fat (9 g sat. fat), 33 mg chol., 184 mg sodium, 68 g carb., 1 g fiber, 4 g pro.



ON THE EDGE

To create a rim of crushed walnuts around the cupcake, smooth frosting all the way to the outer edge of each cupcake top. Place the chopped nuts on a small plate or in a shallow bowl. Before the frosting sets up, hold a cupcake by the base and roll the outside edge of frosting in the nuts, turning the cupcake as you go. For other cupcake recipes, use colored sugars, crushed cookies, jimmies, or finely chopped candies in place of the nuts.

WELL DRAINED

Place the pineapple in a fine-mesh sieve placed over a bowl. Press pineapple with the back of a wooden spoon to release any juice.

PINEAPPLE-CARROT CUPCAKES

PREP 35 minutes
BAKE 15 minutes at 350°F

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- 3 oz. cream cheese, softened
- 2 Tbsp. sugar
- 1 egg yolk
- Dash salt
- ¹/₄ cup canned crushed pineapple, well drained
- 4 eggs, room temperature
- 3 cups finely shredded carrots
 (6 medium)*
- 3/4 cup vegetable oil
- 1 tsp. vanilla

- 1 recipe Cream Cheese Frosting (p. 17)
- 1/2 cup finely chopped toasted walnuts
- Preheat oven to 350°F. Line twenty-four 2½-inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. In a large bowl combine first six ingredients (through baking soda).
 For filling, combine cream cheese and the 2 tablespoons sugar. Beat with a mixer on medium until combined.
 Beat in egg yolk and dash salt. Fold in pineapple.
- **3.** Stir together eggs, carrots, oil, and vanilla. Add egg mixture to flour mixture. Stir until combined.
- **4.** Spoon about 1 tablespoon of the batter into each prepared muffin cup. Drop about 1 rounded teaspoon of the filling into each muffin cup. Spoon the remaining batter over filling in cups.

5. Bake 15 to 18 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool cupcakes in pans 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pans; cool on wire racks.
6. Frost cupcakes with Cream Cheese Frosting. Roll edges of frosting in walnuts. If desired, sprinkle tops with additional cinnamon. Store in the refrigerator. Makes 24 cupcakes.
*TIP Make sure to finely shred the carrots so the pieces don't sink

PER CUPCAKE 390 cal., 18 g fat (6 g sat. fat), 60 mg chol., 241 mg sodium, 56 g carb., 1 g fiber, 3 g pro.

during baking.



SOUR MILK

For each 1 cup sour milk, place 3 teaspoons lemon juice or white vinegar in a measuring cup. Add enough milk to equal 1 cup. Stir mixture. Let stand 5 minutes before using.

21/4 cups all-purpose flour

1½ cups sugar

11/2 tsp. baking powder

1 tsp. baking soda

 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt

1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened

1/4 cup sugar

eggs

1½ tsp. instant espresso coffee powder

Dash salt

2 oz. semisweet chocolate, melted

cup mashed ripe bananas (2 to 3 bananas)

cup buttermilk or sour milk

cup shortening

tsp. vanilla

1 recipe Banana Butter Frosting

Dried banana chips (optional)

five ingredients (through salt).

2. In a bowl beat cream cheese and the ½ cup sugar with a mixer on medium until combined. Beat in one of the eggs, the espresso powder, and the dash salt. Stir in melted chocolate.

3. Add the next four ingredients (through vanilla) to flour mixture; beat on low until combined. Add the remaining two eggs; beat on medium until combined (batter may climb beaters).

4. Spoon a rounded tablespoon of the batter into each prepared muffin cup. Drop a rounded teaspoon of the cream cheese mixture into each muffin cup. Spoon the remaining batter over cream cheese mixture in muffin cups, filling each two-thirds to three-fourths full. 5. Bake 18 to 20 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool cupcakes in pans 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pans; cool on wire racks. 6. Place Banana Butter Frosting in a pastry bag fitted with an open star tip. Pipe a swirl of frosting onto the top

BANANA BUTTER FROSTING In a medium bowl beat ½ cup softened butter with a mixer on medium until smooth. Beat in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup mashed ripe banana. Gradually add 3 cups powdered sugar, beating well. Beat in 1 tablespoon milk and 2 teaspoons vanilla. Gradually beat in 3½ to 4 cups additional powdered sugar until frosting reaches piping consistency. *TIP For mini cupcakes, grease and flour seventy-two 13/4-inch muffin cups. Spoon a rounded teaspoon of the batter into each prepared muffin cup. Drop 1 level teaspoon of the cream cheese mixture into each muffin cup. Scoop a spoonful of the remaining batter over cream cheese mixture in each muffin cup (cream cheese mixture will not be completely covered). Bake 12 to 14 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool cupcakes in pans 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pans; cool on wire racks. Frost as directed. PER CUPCAKE 364 cal., 13 g fat (6 g sat. fat), 47 mg chol., 205 mg sodium, 61 g carb., 1 g fiber, 3 g pro.



PEANUT BUTTER CUPCAKES

PREP 45 minutes

BAKE 18 minutes at 350°F

COOL 45 minutes

11/3 cups all-purpose flour

- ²/₃ cup finely crushed graham crackers
- 1 Tbsp. baking powder
- 1 cup creamy peanut butter
- 1/3 cup shortening
- 11/3 cups sugar
 - 2 eggs, room temperature
 - 1 tsp. vanilla
 - 1 cup milk
- 24 bite-size chocolate-covered peanut butter cups, unwrapped
- Raspberry or strawberry jam
- Bite-size chocolate-covered peanut butter cups, unwrapped and quartered (optional)
- 1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line twentyfour 2½-inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. Combine the first three ingredients (through baking powder). 2. In an extra-large bowl combine peanut butter and shortening. Beat with a mixer on medium until combined. Gradually add sugar, ½ cup at a time, beating until combined. Scrape bowl; beat 2 minutes more. Add eggs, one at a time, beating after each. Beat in vanilla. Add flour mixture and milk alternately, beating on low after each until well combined.
- 3. Spoon a rounded tablespoon of the batter into each prepared muffin cup. Place one of the whole peanut butter cups in each muffin cup on top of the batter. Spoon the remaining batter into muffin cups to cover peanut butter cups.
- 4. Bake about 18 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean (cupcakes may have a slight indentation). Cool cupcakes in pans 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pans; cool on wire racks. Spoon a small amount of jam on top of each cupcake. If desired, garnish each with a quartered peanut butter cup. Makes 24 cupcakes. PER CUPCAKE 295 cal., 15 g fat (5 g

sat. fat), 21 mg chol., 139 mg sodium,

38 g carb., 2 g fiber, 6 g pro.



PIÑA COLADA CAKES

PREP 30 minutes

BAKE 18 minutes at 350°F COOL 45 minutes

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 3/4 tsp. baking powder
- 1/2 tsp. baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt
- 1/3 cup butter, softened
- 11/4 cups sugar
 - eggs, room temperature
 - tsp. vanilla
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- cup milk
- soft macaroon cookies, crumbled
- 1/4 cup chopped macadamia nuts
- cup pineapple preserves
- recipe Coconut Frosting
- Toasted flaked coconut
- 1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line twentyfour 2½-inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. Combine the first four ingredients (through salt).
- 2. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Gradually add sugar, 1/4 cup at a time, beating until combined. Scrape bowl; beat 2 minutes. Add eggs, one at time, beating after

each. Beat in vanilla. Combine sour cream and milk. Add flour mixture and sour cream mixture alternately, beating on low after each until well combined. Stir in crumbled cookies and macadamia nuts. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each two-thirds to three-fourths full. 3. Bake 18 to 20 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool cupcakes in pans 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pans; cool on wire racks. If desired, remove paper liners

4. Spoon pineapple preserves into a pastry bag fitted with a large round tip. Push tip into the top of each cupcake; squeeze some of the preserves inside cupcake.

from cupcakes.

5. Generously spread or pipe Coconut Frosting over tops of cupcakes. Sprinkle with toasted coconut. Makes 24 cupcakes.

COCONUT FROSTING Prepare Cream Cheese Frosting (page 17) as directed, except beat in 1/4 to ½ teaspoon coconut extract with the vanilla.

PER CUPCAKE 367 cal., 14 g fat (8 g sat. fat), 45 mg chol., 211 mg sodium, 60 g carb., 1 g fiber, 3 g pro.



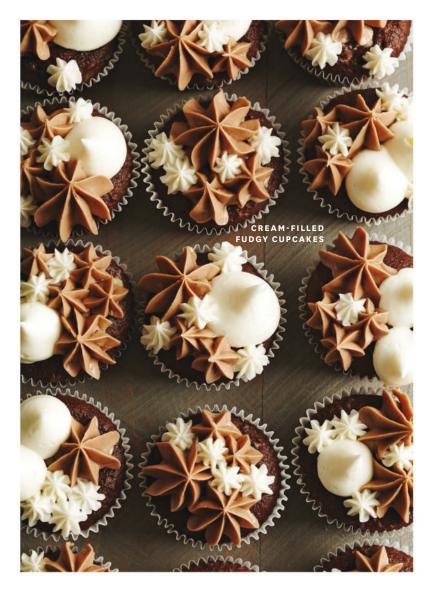
SALTED CARAMEL-CHOCOLATE **CUPCAKES**

PREP 50 minutes BAKE 18 minutes at 325°F COOL 45 minutes

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups water
- 1/3 cup bourbon
- 3 oz. unsweetened chocolate, chopped
- 2 oz. bittersweet chocolate, chopped
- 1 cup butter, softened
- 2 cups sugar
- 3 eggs, room temperature
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. vanilla
 - 1 recipe Fudge Frosting
 - 1 recipe Salted Caramel
 - Sea salt, such as fleur de sel
- 1. Preheat oven to 325°F. Line thirty-two to thirty-four $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. Combine flour, baking soda, and the ½ teaspoon salt. In a 2-cup glass measuring cup combine the water and bourbon.
- 2. Microwave unsweetened chocolate and bittersweet chocolate 11/2 minutes or until smooth, stirring every 30 seconds. Cool slightly.
- 3. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Gradually add sugar, about 1/4 cup at a time, beating on medium until combined. Scrape bowl; beat 2 minutes more. Add eggs, one at a time, beating after each. Beat in melted chocolate and vanilla. Add flour mixture and bourbon mixture alternately, beating on low after each until well combined. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each about three-fourths full.
- 4. Bake 18 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. (Tops of cupcakes may sink slightly, but this will provide a nest for the Salted Caramel filling.) Cool cupcakes in pans 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pans; cool on wire racks. 5. Place Fudge Frosting in a pastry bag fitted with a star tip; pipe a border around edge of each cupcake. Spoon about 1 teaspoon of the Salted Caramel into the center of each cupcake. Sprinkle the caramel lightly with sea salt.

Makes 32 to 34 cupcakes.

FUDGE FROSTING In a large saucepan cook and stir 6 ounces chopped bittersweet chocolate and 2 tablespoons butter over low heat until melted. Cool 5 minutes. Stir in ½ cup sour cream. Gradually add 2½ cups powdered sugar, beating with a mixer on medium until combined. SALTED CARAMEL In a small saucepan combine 2 tablespoons heavy cream and 1 tablespoon bourbon. Heat over medium-low heat until steaming but not boiling. Stir in 24 unwrapped vanilla caramels and ½ teaspoon sea salt (such as fleur de sel). Heat until melted, stirring constantly. PER CUPCAKE 266 cal., 12 g fat (8 g sat. fat), 40 mg chol., 212 mg sodium, 37 g carb., 1 g fiber, 2 g pro.



CREAM-FILLED FUDGY CUPCAKES

PREP 20 minutes BAKE per package directions COOL 45 minutes

- 1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened
- 1/3 cup sugar
- egg
- Dash salt
- 1 cup semisweet chocolate pieces (6 oz.)
- 1 pkg. 2-layer-size chocolate cake
- $2^{1}/_{2}$ to 3 cups Butter Frosting (p. 17) or canned vanilla frosting
- $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 cups Milk Chocolate Butter Frosting (p. 17) or canned chocolate frosting
- 1. Combine cream cheese and sugar. Beat with mixer on medium until combined. Beat in egg and salt. Stir in chocolate pieces.

- **2.** Line thirty $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. Prepare cake mix according to package directions. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each about half full. Drop a rounded teaspoon of the cream cheese mixture into each batter-filled muffin cup.
- 3. Bake according to package directions for cupcakes. Cool cupcakes in pans 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pans; cool on wire racks.
- **4.** Place Butter Frosting in a pastry bag fitted with a medium round tip.* Place Milk Chocolate Butter Frosting in another pastry bag fitted with a medium star tip.* Pipe stars and dots of alternating frostings on top of each cupcake. Makes 30 cupcakes.
- *TIP If desired, use different sizes of round and star tips to make dots and stars of both colors of frosting. PER CUPCAKE 161 cal., 9 g fat (4 g sat. fat), 29 mg chol., 141 mg sodium, 20 g carb., 1 g fiber, 2 g pro.

KES

KIDS LOVE CUPCAKES. AND WHAT BETTER DAY TO INDULGE THE GUEST OF HONOR THAN BIRTHDAY TIME? WHEN EXTRA-SPECIAL CUSTOMIZABLE TREATS ARE KEY. THESE CAKES ARE ALL THAT AND MORE.



PICK-A-SPORT CUPCAKES

DECORATE 1 hour

- 2³/₄ cups Creamy White Frosting (p. 16) or canned creamy white frosting
 - Green food coloring
- 12 desired-flavor 2½-inch cupcakes in paper bake cups
- 1 cup white candy coating disks
- 12 plain doughnut holes
- Red food coloring
- 1. In a medium bowl tint 2 cups of the Creamy White Frosting using green food coloring to make a grass color. Place frosting in a pastry bag fitted with a multi-opening (grass) tip (info, page 20). Pipe frosting onto cupcakes to resemble grass.
- 2. For baseball cupcakes, microwave white candy coating $1\frac{1}{2}$ minutes or until melted, stirring every 30 seconds. Dip doughnut holes into melted candy coating, turning to coat completely. Lift from candy coating with a fork, letting excess drip off. Place on waxed paper until set. (If candy

coating gets too thick while working, microwave just until melted.)

3. Tint remaining ³/₄ cup frosting red using red food coloring. Place frosting in a pastry bag fitted with a round tip. Pipe Xs onto doughnut holes to resemble the stitching on baseballs. Place a doughnut hole on each cupcake. Makes 12 cupcakes.

soccer ball cupcakes Prepare as directed above, except omit red frosting. Microwave a chocolate caramel log (such as Tootsie Roll) 5 seconds. Use a rolling pin to flatten softened candy. Cut out small squares using aspic cutters or a sharp knife; arrange squares on coated doughnut holes, using white frosting to secure.

BASKETBALL CUPCAKES Prepare as directed above, except substitute orange candy coating disks for the white candy coating disks, omit the red frosting, and use a tube of chocolate icing to pipe lines onto coated doughnut holes to resemble basketballs.

PER CUPCAKE 500 cal., 25 g fat (10 g sat. fat), 47 mg chol., 168 mg sodium,

OWL TREE CUPCAKES

DECORATE 1 hour 30 minutes

- 38 desired-flavor 2½-inch cupcakes in paper bake cups
- 1 recipe Creamy White Frosting (p. 16) or two 16-oz. cans vanilla frosting
- Green food coloring
- 1 recipe Chocolate Butter Frosting (p. 17) or one 16-oz. can chocolate frosting
- White candy coating disks
- Brown candy-coated milk chocolate pieces
- Orange-flavor oval mint candies (such as Tic Tacs)
- Sliced almonds
- Milk chocolate pieces
- On the surface on which you plan to serve them, arrange unfrosted cupcakes in the shape of a tree with a trunk.
 Tint Creamy White Frosting desired shade of green. Place green frosting in a pastry bag fitted with a large open star tip.
- **3.** Remove three to five cupcakes from the treetop; set aside for owls. Pipe green frosting in swirls on tops of remaining cupcakes in the treetop. Pipe or spread Chocolate Butter Frosting on the cupcakes that make up the trunk. 4. Spread Chocolate Butter Frosting on the cupcakes reserved for owls. Place two candy coating disks side by side on each cupcake for eyes. Attach candycoated chocolate pieces to the coating discs using frosting. Use orange mint candies for beaks and talons, sliced almonds for breast feathers, and milk chocolate pieces for ear tufts. Return owls to the cupcake tree shape. Makes 38 cupcakes.
- TIP If you plan to move the cupcake tree after it is decorated, arrange the tree shape on an extra-large platter or sturdy cardboard cutout.

PER CUPCAKE 207 cal., 9 g fat (2 g sat. fat), 2 mg chol., 158 mg sodium, 30 g carb., 0 g fiber, 2 g pro.

HOW TO MAKE IT

66 g carb., 0 g fiber, 4 g pro.



To coat sports balls, dip doughnut holes into melted candy coating. Spoon coating over balls to coat.



For baseballs, after coating has hardened, pipe red baseball seams.



For soccer balls, use tiny aspic cutters (or a sharp knife) to cut shapes from flattened candy.



Attach candy cutouts to soccer balls with frosting.







KITTY CAKES

DECORATE 1 hour

- White, orange, yellow, green, and/or chocolate jimmies
- 1 16-oz. can vanilla and/or chocolate frosting
- 12 desired flavor $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch cupcakes in paper bake cups
- Small gumdrops, cut into slices crosswise
- Pink tiny marshmallows, halved crosswise
- Black shoestring licorice, cut into pieces
- White or chocolate candy coating disks
- 1. For kitty cupcakes, pour each color of jimmies onto separate plates (or for multicolor cats, combine one or two colors on one plate). Spread frosting onto each cupcake. Dip frosted cupcake tops in jimmies to cover. For eyes, attach gumdrop slices with frosting, cut sides up. Attach a jimmy in the center of each eye using frosting.
- 2. Squeeze tiny pink marshmallow halves with fingers to form a triangular shape. Use frosting to attach marshmallow pieces for nose and licorice pieces for whiskers.
- **3.** Using a sharp knife, trim each candy coating disk into triangles for ears (if necessary for easier cutting, microwave in a single layer a few seconds at a time until discs are just barely softened). Press into frosting at the top of each kitty head. **Makes 12 cupcakes**.

TIP If you have difficulty locating black shoestring licorice, you can pipe chocolate frosting whiskers onto cupcakes using a pastry bag fitted with a small round tip.

YARN CUPCAKES For yarn cupcakes, place desired-color frosting in a pastry bag fitted with a small to medium round tip. Pipe side-by-side lines of frosting onto cupcakes to cover tops. Pipe several lines of frosting crosswise in the center of each cupcake.

PER CUPCAKE 335 cal., 14 g fat (3 g sat. fat), 28 mg chol., 228 mg sodium, 52 g carb., 0 g fiber, 2 g pro.







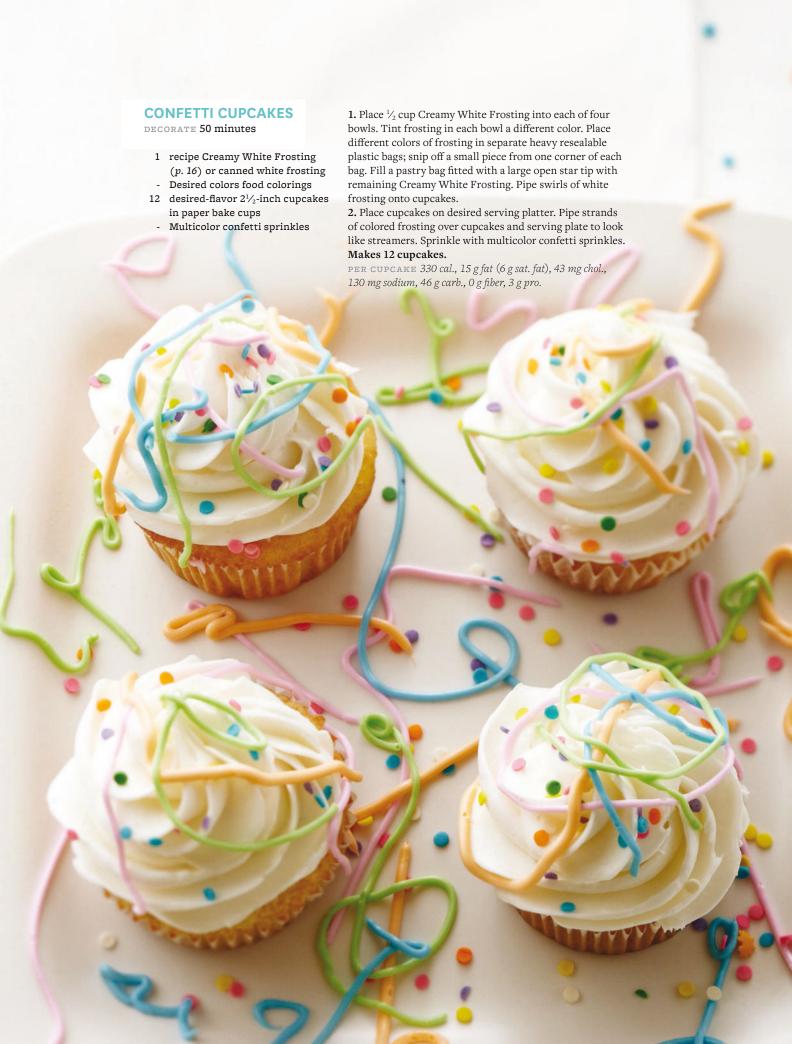
LIONS, TIGERS, AND BEARS CUPCAKES DECORATE 1 hour

- 1 recipe Creamy White Frosting (p. 16) or two 16-oz. cans creamy white frosting
- Yellow and orange food coloring
- 12 desired-flavor 2½-inch cupcakes in paper bake cups
- $rac{1}{2}$ cup Chocolate Butter Frosting (p. 17) or canned chocolate frosting
- 1 tube black icing
- Round oat cereal
- Miniature round vanilla wafers
- Miniature candy-coated chocolate pieces
- Black sugar pearl sprinkles
- Black jelly beans
- Orange fruit gel candy slices, cut into small triangles
- 1. Divide Creamy White Frosting in half. Use food colorings to tint one portion yellow and one portion orange. Frost four of the cupcakes yellow and four of the cupcakes orange. Spread Chocolate Butter Frosting on the four remaining cupcakes. Spoon orange frosting along one side of a pastry

- bag fitted with a multi-opening tip. Spoon yellow frosting along the other side of the bag. Fit the tube of black icing with a round tip attachment.
- 2. For lion cupcakes, on the yellow-frosted cupcakes, use the bag filled with orange and yellow frosting to pipe frosting around the edges to look like a mane. Add oat cereal for ears. Place a miniature vanilla wafer on face for muzzle. Pipe black frosting for eyes and mouth; attach a brown candy-coated chocolate piece for nose using frosting.
- **3.** For tiger cupcakes, on orange-frosted cupcakes pipe black frosting in triangle-shape stripes around the face. Pipe black frosting for eyes and mouth; add a black pearl sprinkle to each eye. Attach a black jelly bean for nose. Attach orange gel candy triangles for ears.
- 4. For bear cupcakes, place a miniature vanilla wafer on each chocolate-frosted cupcake. Pipe black frosting for eyes, mouth, and hair tuft. Attach a brown candy-coated chocolate piece for nose using frosting. Attach oat cereal for ears.

Makes 12 cupcakes.

PER CUPCAKE 490 cal., 22 g fat (9 g sat. fat), 50 mg chol., 164 mg sodium, 72 g carb., 1 g fiber, 3 g pro.





BEACH PARTY CUPCAKES

DECORATE 1 hour 30 minutes

- 2 16-oz. cans vanilla frosting
- Blue food coloring
- desired-flavor 2½-inch cupcakes in paper bake cups
- 2 tubes blue decorating gel
- ²/₃ cup finely crushed vanilla wafers (16 cookies)
- 2 plain doughnut holes
- to 4 assorted flavors rolled fruit leather
- 2 peanut-shape peanut butter sandwich cookies
- Black shoestring licorice, cut into small pieces
- 1 or 2 fruit-flavor ring-shape jelly candies
- 1. Place $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the frosting in a small bowl; set aside. Tint half of the remaining frosting with blue food coloring. Frost half of the cupcakes with blue frosting. Use blue gel to pipe waves onto blue frosted cupcakes. Frost the remaining cupcakes with white frosting; sprinkle white cupcakes generously with crushed vanilla wafers to resemble sand.
- 2. For beach balls, microwave the reserved ½ cup frosting 10 to 20 seconds or until melted. Using a fork, dip doughnut holes into melted frosting, turning to coat. Place on waxed paper; let dry. For panels on beach balls, unroll fruit leather and cut eight 3×1/2-inch rectangles, tapering short ends to a point. Place four strips on each coated doughnut hole to look like beach balls. Set aside until set.
- 3. For beach towels, unroll and cut the remaining fruit leather into 3×2-inch rectangles. If desired, cut fringe at the short ends of rectangles. Roll up the rectangles so they resemble towels. 4. For flip-flops, separate peanut butter
- sandwich cookies; scrape off filling. Use filling to attach two short pieces of shoestring licorice onto smooth side of each cookie half to look like flip-flops. 5. Arrange beach balls, beach towels, flip-flops, and ring-shape jelly candies on platter with cupcakes. Makes

PER CUPCAKE 380 cal., 15 g fat (6 g sat. fat), 43 mg chol., 235 mg sodium, 59 g carb., 0 g fiber, 3 g pro.

24 cupcakes.



SEA TURTLE CUPCAKES

DECORATE 45 minutes

- 2 cups Creamy White Frosting (p. 16) or canned creamy white frosting
- Blue and green food colorings
- 12 desired-flavor 2½-inch cupcakes in paper bake cups
- Coarse sugar or turbinado sugar
- vanilla sandwich cookies
- Green gumdrops, halved lengthwise
- Blue or green colored sugar
- 1 tube black icing

1. Tint 1 cup of the Creamy White Frosting blue using food coloring. Tint the remaining 1 cup frosting green using food coloring. Place frostings in separate heavy resealable plastic bags; snip off a small piece from one corner of each bag. Pipe small mounds of frosting onto cupcakes, alternating colors. Use a thin metal spatula to swirl colors together. Set aside six of the cupcakes for swirled sea cupcakes without turtles. 2. For turtle cupcakes, sprinkle some coarse sugar onto the tops of the remaining six frosted cupcakes. Split

sandwich cookies; discard filling. Place a cookie half on the center of each brown sugar-topped cupcake. Tuck five gumdrop halves under the edge of each cookie half for a head and four feet. (If necessary, flatten the gumdrop halves.) Pipe blue and green frosting designs onto the cookies for shell plates. Sprinkle with colored sugar. Pipe blue eyes onto the turtles' heads. Use black icing to pipe pupils onto the eyes. Makes 12 cupcakes.

PER CUPCAKE 411 cal., 18 g fat (7 g sat. fat), 43 mg chol., 146 mg sodium, 59 g carb., 0 g fiber, 3 g pro.

HOW TO MAKE IT



For swirled sea cupcakes, pipe small mounds of blue and green frostings.



Use a spatula to swirl frostings together.



Create peaks at the top to look like waves.

END OF THE RAINBOW

START TO FINISH 40 minutes

- 3 to 4 cups Creamy White Frosting (p. 16) or canned creamy white frosting
- Purple, blue, green, yellow, orange, and red food colorings
- 26 to 32 desired-flavor 2½-inch cupcakes in paper bake cups
 - Purple, blue, green, yellow, orange, and red decorating sugars
- 2 cups tiny marshmallows
- 1. Divide Creamy White Frosting into six portions (tip, *opposite*). Tint each portion a different color with food coloring. Place each color in a disposable pastry bag.
- 2. On an extra-large serving platter arrange cupcakes tightly together in a rainbow shape (tip, page 44); use six to eight cupcakes for the inside row, eight to 10 cupcakes for the middle row, and 12 to 14 cupcakes for the outside row. 3. Snip off the tip of each pastry bag. Pipe rows of colored frosting onto tops of cupcakes to make a large rainbow. If desired, use a narrow metal spatula to gently spread frosting to fill in gaps. Sprinkle matching sugars over colored frostings. Sprinkle marshmallows over frosting at each end of the rainbow to resemble clouds. Makes 26 to 32 cupcakes.

PER CUPCAKE 328 cal., 14 g fat (6 g sat. fat), 43 mg chol., 135 mg sodium, 47 g carb., 0 g fiber, 3 g pro.

HOW TO MAKE IT



On a large platter or clean, movable surface, tightly arrange cupcakes in the shape of a rainbow.



Pipe frostings into rows to create rainbow. If desired, smooth out frosting with a spatula.







FINISHING ТОПСН

DECORATE 45 minutes

progressively darker shades of the same color—makes a striking flower centerpiece. And the color options

An ombré design—

are endless for this

simple pattern.

lower power

- 1 recipe Creamy White Frosting (p. 16) or two 16-oz. cans vanilla frosting
 - 24 desired-flavor 2½-inch cupcakes in paper bake cups Pink or lavender food coloring Malted milk balls
- 1. Tint frosting a light shade of pink using the food coloring; frost seven of the cupcakes. Top one of the cupcakes with malted milk balls for the center cupcake. Add more food frosting to make it darker; frost the remaining 11 cupcakes. coloring to the frosting to make it darker; frost six more 2. On the surface on which you will be serving (tip, page 44) cupcakes. Add additional food coloring to the remaining place malted milk ball-topped cupcake. Arrange lightestprogressively darker from the inside to the outside. Arrange cupcakes in one big flower shape, with cupcakes getting color cupcakes around the center. Continue arranging stem under the flower (tip, right). Makes 24 cupcakes. PER CUPCAKE 137 cal., 6gfat (1gsat.fat) 28 mg chol., Customize it using a mix of the birthday child's favorite

add sprinkles colors, and

or candies for special 153 mg sodium, 19 g carb., 0 g fiber, 2 g pro.

SHOWERS

WHETHER THEY'RE FOR BRIDES-TO-BE OR MOMS-TO-BE, THESE TREATS CELEBRATE WEDDINGS AND NEW BABIES IN SWEET STYLE. (PLUS, LEARN TWO FUN WAYS TO REVEAL WHETHER BABY IS A GIRL OR BOY!)



WEDDING SHOWER



STORAGE

For longer storage, place candied flowers between layers of waxed paper in a freezer container. Seal, label, and freeze up to 6 months.

WHAT TO BUY

Make sure all the flowers you use are edible and grown without harmful pesticides or residues. Look for reputable sources online, such as melissas.com. Florist's flowers aren't fit for consumption.

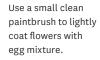
CANDIED FLOWERS

PREP 30 minutes STAND 2 hours

- 1 cup edible flowers, such as fresh orchids, pansies, borage, and/or rose petals
- 2 Tbsp. water
- 1 Tbsp. refrigerated or frozen egg product, thawed
- 2 Tbsp. superfine granulated sugar
- 1. Gently wash flowers in water. Place flowers on paper towels and let air-dry or gently blot dry.
- 2. Combine the 2 tablespoons water and the egg product. Using a small clean paintbrush, gently brush all sides of each flower with the egg mixture in a thin, even layer. Sprinkle each flower evenly with sugar. Shake each flower to remove excess sugar. Let dry on a wire rack at least 2 hours. 3. Store candied flowers in an airtight container between
- layers of waxed paper up to 4 weeks. Use to decorate frosted cupcakes.

HOW TO MAKE IT







Sprinkle flowers in superfine sugar, coating all sides completely.



Place sugar-coated flowers on a wire rack; allow flowers to dry completely (at least 2 hours) before using as decorations.

BUTTER CAKES WITH SOUR CREAM FROSTING

PREP 45 minutes BAKE 15 minutes at 350°F COOL 45 minutes

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- cup butter, softened
- 11/3 cups sugar
 - eggs, room temperature
 - tsp. vanilla
- cup buttermilk or sour milk (tip, p. 37)
- cup raspberry or strawberry jam
- recipe Sour Cream Frosting
- Lavender food coloring (optional)
- 1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line twenty-four $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. Combine the first four ingredients (through salt.)
- 2. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Add sugar, $\frac{1}{3}$ cup at a time, beating on medium until combined. Scrape bowl; beat 2 minutes more. Add eggs, one at a time, beating after each. Beat in vanilla. Add flour mixture and buttermilk alternately, beating on low after each until well combined.
- about two-thirds full. Bake 15 to 18 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool cupcakes in pans

3. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each

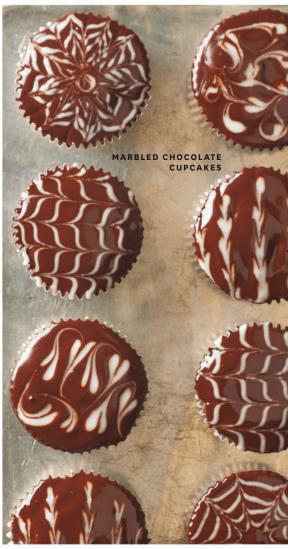
- 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pans; cool on wire racks.
- 4. Using the handle of a wooden spoon, make an indentation in the center of each cupcake. Place jam in a pastry bag fitted with a small round tip. Pipe a scant teaspoon of the jam into each indentation. If desired, tint Sour Cream Frosting desired lavender color. Fill another pastry bag fitted with a large open star tip with frosting. Pipe five large rosettes around the top edge of each cupcake. Pipe one rosette in the center of each cupcake. Chill until ready to serve. Makes 24 cupcakes. **SOUR CREAM FROSTING** In a large bowl beat ½ cup

softened butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Beat in one 8-ounce carton sour cream and 1 teaspoon vanilla. Gradually add 2 pounds powdered sugar (about 8 cups), beating well. Beat in 1 to 3 teaspoons milk to make frosting piping consistency.

PER CUPCAKE 381 cal., 14 g fat (9 g sat. fat), 59 mg chol., 207 mg sodium, 62 g carb., 0 g fiber, 2 g pro.







SIMPLIFY

To streamline the decorating process, you can use just one color for the clay and ganache instead of creating two of each. To do this, just make twice as much of desired-color clay and ganache.

BLACK AND WHITE BOWS

DECORATE 1 hour 30 minutes

- 4 oz. vanilla candy coating, coarsely chopped
- 1/4 cup light-color corn syrup
- 4 oz. dark cocoa candy melts
- $\frac{1}{2}$ recipe Ganache (p. 18)
- 12 2½-inch chocolate cupcakes in paper bake cups
- 1 recipe White Chocolate Ganache Frosting
- 12 2½-inch white cupcakes in paper bake cups
 - Powdered sugar
- 1. For white clay, microwave vanilla candy coating 1 to 2 minutes or until melted, stirring once. Stir in 2 tablespoons of the corn syrup. Spoon

onto plastic wrap. Cover and let stand at least 1 hour or until cooled and firm. For chocolate clay, repeat using dark cocoa candy melts and the remaining 2 tablespoons corn syrup. When firm, unwrap and knead each mixture separately until smooth and pliable. Wrap each in plastic wrap; set aside.

2. Spoon Ganache over chocolate cupcakes and White Chocolate Ganache Frosting over white cupcakes. Chill until firm.

3. Between separate sheets of waxed paper dusted with powdered sugar, roll out white clay and chocolate clay to ½-inch thickness. Using a pizza cutter or knife, cut clay into 1-inchwide strips about 5 inches long. For each bow, bring ends of a strip together, making a double thickness.

Turn upside down, with the seam underneath. Gently pinch in center. Trim scraps of clay into ribbon tails and center knots. Place two tails on top of each cupcake; top with a bow and a knot. Makes 24 cupcakes.

WHITE CHOCOLATE GANACHE FROSTING In a small saucepan melt 2 ounces white baking chocolate with cocoa butter over low heat. Remove from heat. Stir in ³/₄ cup Creamy White Frosting (page 16) or canned creamy white frosting. If necessary, stir in 1 tablespoon milk to make frosting smooth.

PER CUPCAKE 358 cal., 20 g fat (12 g sat. fat), 76 mg chol., 175 mg sodium, 44 g carb., 1 g fiber, 4 g pro.

MARBLED CHOCOLATE CUPCAKES

PREP 45 minutes BAKE 15 minutes at 350°F DECORATE 30 minutes

- 11/4 cups all-purpose flour
- ½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1/2 tsp. baking powder
- 1/4 tsp. baking soda
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 eggs, room temperature
- 2 oz. semisweet chocolate, melted and cooled
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. vanilla
- 3/4 cup milk
- 6 tsp. seedless red raspberry or blackberry preserves
- 1 recipe Ganache (p. 18)
- 1 recipe Decorating Icing
- 1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line twenty-two to twenty-four $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch muffin cups with foil bake cups.
- 2. Combine the first six ingredients (through cinnamon). In an extra-large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Add sugar, ½ cup at a time, beating on medium until combined. Scrape bowl; beat 2 minutes more. Add eggs, one at a time, beating after each. Beat in melted chocolate and vanilla. Add flour mixture and milk alternately, beating on low after each until well combined.
- 3. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each half full ($2\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons). Bake 15 to 18 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool cupcakes in pans 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pans; cool completely on wire racks. 4. Place cupcakes 2 inches apart on wire racks set over
- waxed paper. Spread about 1/4 teaspoon of the preserves over each cupcake.
- 5. Working with one cupcake at a time, spread ³/₄ teaspoon of the Chocolate Ganache over each cupcake,* covering the preserves and entire surface of the cupcake. Place Decorating Icing in a pastry bag fitted with a small round tip (or place icing in a heavy resealable plastic bag and snip off a small piece from one corner). Pipe large dots onto each cupcake. Drag a toothpick through icing dots to create swirls and designs. Repeat with remaining cupcakes. Makes 22 to 24 cupcakes.

DECORATING ICING In a small bowl stir together ³/₄ cup powdered sugar and enough milk (2 to 3 teaspoons) to make icing piping consistency.

*TIP If ganache becomes too thick while decorating, reheat ganache, stirring constantly, over medium-low heat until chocolate reaches desired consistency.

PER CUPCAKE 188 cal., 8 g fat (5 g sat. fat), 33 mg chol., 88 mg sodium, 28 g carb., 1 g fiber, 2 g pro.



TRIPLE-CHOCOLATE **CUPCAKES**

PREP 1 hour

BAKE 15 minutes at 350°F COOL 45 minutes

- 6 oz. bittersweet chocolate, chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter, cut into pieces
- Tbsp. crème de cacao
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup all-purpose flour tsp. baking powder
- tsp. salt
- eggs, separated, at room temperature
- ½ cup sugar
- tsp. vanilla
- recipe Dark Chocolate Frosting
- Chopped bittersweet chocolate
- 1. In a medium saucepan combine the 6 ounces chocolate and the butter. Cook and stir over medium heat until melted. Remove from heat. Stir in crème de cacao: cool.
- 2. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line twelve $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch muffin cups with paper bake cups or parchment paper. Combine the next three ingredients (through salt). 3. In a large bowl beat egg yolks and sugar with a mixer on high 3 minutes or until thick and lemon color. Beat in chocolate mixture and vanilla. Add flour mixture, beating until combined.

4. Wash beaters thoroughly. In a medium bowl beat egg whites on high just until stiff peaks form (tips stand straight). Stir a small amount of the beaten egg whites into chocolate mixture to lighten. Fold in the remaining beaten egg whites. 5. Spoon batter into the prepared muffin cups, filling each about two-thirds full. 6. Bake 15 to 18 minutes or until tops spring back when lightly touched. Cool cupcakes in pans 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pans; cool on wire racks. 7. Spoon Dark Chocolate Frosting into a pastry bag fitted with a medium star tip. Pipe long stars of frosting onto tops of cupcakes. Sprinkle with additional chopped chocolate. Makes 12 cupcakes.

DARK CHOCOLATE FROSTING In a large bowl beat 6 tablespoons softened butter with a mixer on medium until smooth. Gradually add 1 cup powdered sugar, beating well. Beat in 2 ounces dark chocolate, melted and cooled; 2 tablespoons milk; and 1 tablespoon crème de cacao. Gradually beat in 3 cups additional powdered sugar. Beat in enough additional milk (1 to 2 tablespoons) until frosting reaches piping consistency.

PER CUPCAKE 473 cal., 23 g fat (14 g sat. fat), 90 mg chol., 180 mg sodium, 67 g carb., 2 g fiber, 5 g pro.





LEMON-POPPY SEED CUPCAKES

PREP 35 minutes

BAKE 10 minutes at 350°F

COOL 45 minutes

13/4 cups all-purpose flour

2 tsp. poppy seeds

11/2 tsp. baking powder

 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt

1 lemon

1/2 cup butter, softened

1 cup sugar

2 eggs

1½ tsp. lemon extract

½ tsp. vanilla

²/₃ cup milk

1 recipe Lemon Glaze

- Lemon peel strips (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line fortyeight 1¾-inch muffin cups or eighteen 2½-inch muffin cups (tip, *right*) with paper bake cups. Combine the first four ingredients (through salt). Remove 2 teaspoons zest and squeeze 3 tablespoons juice from lemon.

2. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Add sugar, ¼ cup at a time, beating on medium until combined. Scrape bowl;

beat 2 minutes more. Add eggs, one at a time, beating after each. Beat in lemon extract and vanilla. Add flour mixture and milk alternately, beating on low after each until well combined. Stir in lemon zest and lemon juice.

3. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each about three-fourths full. Bake 10 to 12 minutes for 1¾-inch cupcakes or 16 to 18 minutes for 2½-inch cupcakes, or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool cupcakes in pans 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pans; cool on wire racks.

4. Spread Lemon Glaze onto cupcakes. If desired, top cupcakes with lemon peel strips. Let stand 10 minutes. Makes 48 cupcakes. LEMON GLAZE In a small bowl combine 1 cup powdered sugar and enough lemon juice (5 to 5½ teaspoons) to reach spreading consistency. Stir in ½ teaspoon lemon zest.

PER CUPCAKE 66 cal., 2 g fat (1 g sat. fat), 14 mg chol., 54 mg sodium, 11 g carb., 0 g fiber, 1 g pro.

CHANGE UP THE SIZE

If you like, make both sizes of cupcakes for bigger "mother" cupcakes and smaller "baby" cupcakes.





GOING **SQUARE!**

Mix it up a little with a square muffin pan (also great for brownies). Check specialty cooking stores or shop online.

ABC BLOCK CUPCAKES

DECORATE 1 hour

- 2 cups Creamy White Frosting (p. 16) or canned creamy white frosting
- 12 desired-flavor large or 24 small square cupcakes
- Pastel-color paste food colorings
- Powdered sugar
- oz. Easy Homemade Fondant (p. 18) or white rolled fondant

1. Place \(\frac{1}{4} \) cup of the Creamy White Frosting in a pastry bag fitted with a small star tip; set aside. Microwave $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups of the frosting about 30 seconds or just until melted. Frost cupcakes with melted white frosting. Divide remaining frosting into desired portions; using paste food coloring, tint each portion a different color, leaving one portion white. Place tinted frostings in separate pastry bags fitted with small round tips and white frosting STRAWBERRY CUPCAKES in a pastry bag fitted with a small star tip. Pipe colored square outlines on tops BAKE 18 minutes at 350°F of cupcakes. Pipe white stars in corners. GOOL 45 minutes 2. On a surface lightly dusted with powdered sugar, divide Easy Homemade Fondant into three portions. Tint each portion a different color with food coloring. Knead each portion until evenly colored.* (Work with one portion of fondant at a time, and keep fondant covered when not using.) Roll out fondant to 1/8-inch thickness. 3. Use $1\frac{1}{2}$ to $2\frac{1}{2}$ inch alphabet or number cookie cutters to cut out shapes. Place letters or numbers on frosted cupcakes. If desired, use frosting in a pastry bag fitted with a small round tip to pipe outlines around letters and numbers. Makes

12 cupcakes.

*TIP If you like, wear plastic gloves to keep from discoloring your hands. PER CUPCAKE 397 cal., 18 g fat (7 g sat. fat), 43 mg chol., 133 mg sodium, 57 g carb., 0 g fiber, 3 g pro.



PREP 35 minutes

- 1 10-oz. pkg. frozen halved strawberries in syrup or one 16-oz. container sliced strawberries in sugar, thawed
- 1 pkg. 2-layer-size white cake mix
- $\frac{1}{2}$ 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened
- 1/4 cup butter, softened
- tsp. vanilla
- 4 cups powdered sugar Red food coloring (optional)
- 24 whole fresh strawberries

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line twentyfour 2½-inch muffin cups with paper bake cups; set aside. Drain packaged strawberries, reserving syrup. Set aside 3 tablespoons of the syrup for frosting. Add enough water to the remaining syrup to measure 3/4 cup total liquid. Prepare cake mix according to package directions, substituting the syrup-water mixture for the liquid called for on the package. Stir in drained strawberries. (Batter will be thick.)

- 2. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each about two-thirds full. 3. Bake 18 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool cupcakes in pans 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pans; cool on wire racks.
- 4. Meanwhile, in a large bowl beat cream cheese, butter, vanilla, and the reserved 3 tablespoons syrup with a mixer on medium until light and fluffy. Gradually beat in powdered sugar. If desired, beat in 1 or 2 drops red food coloring. Pipe or spread frosting onto cupcakes. Store frosted cupcakes in the refrigerator. Before serving, top each cupcake with a whole strawberry. Makes 24 cupcakes.

MAKE AHEAD Prepare cupcakes as directed through Step 3. Place unfrosted cupcakes in a single layer in an airtight container; seal. Store at room temperature up to 3 days. Continue as directed in Step 4. PER CUPCAKE 248 cal., 9 g fat (3 g sat. fat), 37 mg chol., 185 mg sodium, 41 g carb., 1 g fiber, 2 g pro.

BABY REVEAL

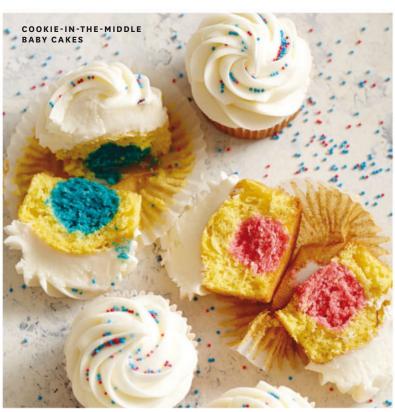
BABY SURPRISE! CUPCAKES

PREP 40 minutes BAKE 16 minutes at 350°F COOL 45 minutes STAND 1 hour 30 minutes

- 3/4 cup butter, cut up
- 4 oz. unsweetened chocolate, chopped
- 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
- ½ tsp. baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt
- 11/3 cups sugar
 - 2 eggs
 - 1 tsp. vanilla
 - 1 cup Pastel Frosting
 - 1 recipe Shiny Chocolate Glaze
- 1. Preheat oven to 350°F. In a medium microwave-safe bowl microwave butter and chocolate $1\frac{1}{2}$ minutes or until melted, stirring every 30 seconds. Let mixture cool slightly. Meanwhile, line fifteen $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. In a bowl combine the next three ingredients (through salt).
- 2. Add sugar to chocolate mixture. Beat with a mixer on medium 2 minutes. Add eggs, one at a time, beating after each. Beat in vanilla. Add flour mixture; beat on low until combined.
- 3. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each about half full. Bake about 16 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean (cupcakes will have flat tops). Cool cupcakes in pans 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pans; cool on wire racks.
- 4. Spoon about 1 tablespoon Pastel Frosting in the center of each cupcake, spreading to within 1/4 inch of the edges. Let frosting set completely before adding the glaze. Carefully spoon Shiny Chocolate Glaze in the center of each cupcake, spreading toward the edges to cover the frosting. Let stand at room temperature until glaze is firm. Makes 15 cupcakes. **PASTEL FROSTING** In a medium bowl beat 3 tablespoons softened butter with a mixer on medium until smooth. Beat in ½ cup powdered sugar. Beat in 1 tablespoon milk, ½ teaspoon vanilla, and, if desired, a few drops peppermint extract. Beat in additional 1½ cups powdered sugar until smooth. Beat in a few drops pink or blue food coloring and additional milk, if necessary, to make spreadable. SHINY CHOCOLATE GLAZE In a small heavy saucepan heat 4 ounces semisweet chocolate and ½ cup butter over low heat until melted and smooth, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat; stir in 1 tablespoon corn syrup. Transfer to a small bowl. Let stand 15 minutes or until slightly thickened. PER CUPCAKE 383 cal., 22 g fat (13 g sat. fat), 64 mg chol., 222 mg sodium, 47 g carb., 0 g fiber, 3 g pro.







COOKIE-IN-THE-MIDDLE **BABY CAKES**

PREP 1 hour STAND 20 minutes BAKE 18 minutes at 350°F

- 1 16.5-oz. roll refrigerated sugar cookie dough
- 2 to 3 Tbsp. all-purpose flour
- Pink or blue food coloring
- 1 recipe Yellow Cupcakes (p. 14) or one pkg. 2-layer-size white or yellow cake mix
- 1/2 tsp. almond extract
- recipe Sour Cream Frosting (p. 58) or Butter Frosting (p. 17)
- Nonpareils (optional)
- 1. Let cookie dough stand at room temperature 20 minutes. Place ½ cup cookie dough in a bowl; chill remaining dough for another use (see "Cookie Babies," right). Add 2 tablespoons flour and desired amount food coloring to dough in bowl. Knead dough until flour and food coloring are incorporated. If dough is sticky, knead in additional 1 tablespoon flour.
- 2. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line about twenty 2½-inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. Prepare desired cupcake batter as directed, except beat in ½ teaspoon almond extract with the liquid in the recipe or cake mix. Place 1 teaspoon cupcake batter in the bottom of each muffin cup. Roll 1-teaspoon portions tinted sugar cookie dough into balls. Place each ball over batter in muffin cups. Spoon remaining cupcake batter over cookie dough balls, filling each about half full. Bake 18 to 20 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Transfer cupcakes to wire racks to cool completely.
- 3. To decorate, fill a pastry bag fitted with a large star tip with Sour Cream Frosting. Pipe a large swirl of frosting onto each cupcake. If desired, sprinkle with nonpareils. Store cupcakes loosely covered in refrigerator. Makes 20 cupcakes.

PER CUPCAKE 402 cal., 14 g fat (8 g sat. fat), 55 mg chol., 215 mg sodium, 68 g carb., 0 g fiber, 3 g pro.



BABIES

With the extra cookie dough, you can make cute cookie babies to serve on the side. To do this, knead % cup flour and, if desired, food coloring into remaining sugar cookie dough. Chill about 30 minutes. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough to %-inch thickness. Cut dough using desired-size round cookie cutter. Place cookies 1 inch apart on a parchment paper-lined cookie sheet. Bake at 375°F 7 to 10 minutes or until edges are golden brown. Cool completely. Pipe yellow-tinted canned white frosting for hats and pacifiers on each cookie. Add small round yellow candies for pom-poms on the hats and yellow fruit-flavor round whole grain cereal (such as Fruity Cheerios) for pacifier handles. Pipe blacktinted icing for eyes and noses.



WEDDING CUPCAKE BOUQUET

DECORATE 1 hour

- Florists foam
- vase or clean flowerpot
- Marbles or decorative rocks
- Wooden skewers and toothpicks
- 6-inch foam ball
- Artificial leaves and greenery
- cupcakes in paper bake cups to 24 desired-flavor 21/2-inch 20
- recipes Creamy White Frosting (p. 16)*

7

- Desired-color food coloring
- 1. Place a large chunk of florists foam in Desired candy

into the foam. Fill the rest of the vase with unfrosted cupcakes on the ball, using two to four toothpicks to attach each cupcake to the foam ball. Repeat with remaining bottom of the vase; insert a long skewer marbles for stability. Push the foam ball into the skewer sticking out of the vase. Insert the stems of artificial leaves and To determine placement, organize greenery into the base of the ball.

fitted with desired tips (see "Tips on Tips", frosting to firm up slightly. Working from above left). Pipe frosting onto cupcakes in desired flower designs; add candy accents. thin layer of frosting onto each cupcake. Place remaining frosting in pastry bags 2. Tint frosting desired colors. Spread a 3. Let cupcakes stand 30 minutes for

bottom to top of foam ball, slide decorated cupcakes back onto toothpicks. If desired, greenery into spaces between cupcakes. insert additional artificial leaves and Makes 20 to 24 cupcakes.

PER CUPCAKE 341 cal., 17 g fat (4 g sat. fat), White Frosting to make it pipeable but not *TIP Add just enough liquid to Creamy 0 mg chol., 152 mg sodium, 46 g carb., 0 g soft. The frosting needs to be thick. fiber, 2 g pro.

can customize the colors and designs and some skewers, it's easy to create to fit the guest of honor's personality. shower (or any occasion!). Plus, you With the help of a foam crafts ball a beautiful bouquet for a bridal

much easier to create than you might think.

The designs on these three cupcakes are

TIPS ON TIPS

such as all white hydrangeas. The effect is

still stunning.

To simplify, just use one color and design,

WHITE CONEFLOWER: Use a rose tip

HOW TO MAKE IT



cupcakes. Remove all cupcakes, leaving

toothpicks in the ball.



unfrosted cupcakes on ball using two to greenery into base our toothpicks for each cake. Insert of ball. Organize toothpicks into Stick stems of

skewers into a chunk

of florists foam in the bottom of the vase, then added

inserted a couple of ball to the vase. We



cupcakes back on the toothpicks on and frosting has been decorated cupcakes have set, place the the ball.



the spaces between are placed, you can floral greenery into Once the cupcakes between cupcakes additional artificial fill in any spaces by inserting

cupcakes as filler.

Remove cakes from cupcake onto them.

the skewers sticking

out of the top of the vase.

Press the ball into

marbles to the vase.

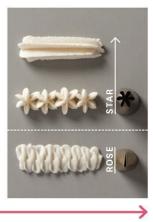
oicks in the foam.

ball before sliding

to look like petals. Top with a second layer and hold the bag so the tip is flat against squiggles around the rim of the cupcake the cupcake with the wide part of the tip pointing toward the outside. Pipe thick of squiggle petals. Place a blackberry gumdrop candy in the center.

short bursts all over the top of the cupcake. open star tip to pipe white frosting stars in WHITE HYDRANGEA: Use a large

spiral, ending at the outside of the cupcake. PINK ROSE: With the large open star tip pointed straight down in the middle of the cupcake, start piping frosting into a large



location, transport the decorated cupcakes separately from the base (see "On the READY TO GO For best results, add cupcakes to the foam ball as close to the Road," page 131) and assemble on location (bring extra cupcakes and frosting in it from being bumped or tipped. If you have to transport the bouquet to another time you are serving as possible. Place the vase in a secure location to prevent case you need to fix or replace cupcakes).







LEMON MERINGUE PIE CUPCAKES

PREP 35 minutes BAKE 22 minutes at 350°F COOL 45 minutes

- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups all-purpose flour
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. baking powder
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- $^{2}/_{3}$ cup milk
- 1/4 cup lemon curd
- ½ cup butter, softened
- 4 eggs, room temperature
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. vanilla
 - 2 Tbsp. lemon curd
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. cream of tartar
- ²/₃ cup granulated sugar
- Powdered sugar
- 1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line fifteen $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. In a small bowl stir together flour, baking powder, and salt. In another small bowl whisk together milk and the $\frac{1}{4}$ cup lemon curd until nearly smooth. Set aside.

CLOUDLIKE MAKES THESE CUPCAKES TASTE JUST LIKE THE PIE.

- 2. Separate eggs carefully. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium to high 30 seconds. Add the 3 /4 cup granulated sugar. Beat on medium to high 1 minute. Add egg yolks and vanilla; beat until combined. Alternately add flour mixture and milk mixture to butter mixture, beating on low after each just until combined.
- ${\bf 3.}$ Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each about two-thirds full. Use the back of a spoon to smooth out batter in cups.
- **4.** Bake about 15 minutes or until golden and tops spring back when lightly touched.
- 5. Meanwhile, place the 2 tablespoons lemon curd in a small heavy resealable plastic bag. Snip a small piece from one corner; set aside. Wash beaters thoroughly. For meringue, in a clean large bowl combine egg whites and cream of tartar. Beat on medium until soft peaks form (tips curl). Gradually add the ½, cup granulated sugar, 1 tablespoon at a time, beating on high until stiff peaks form (tips stand straight).
 6. Remove cupcakes from oven. Pipe a small amount of the 2 tablespoons lemon curd onto the center of each cupcake. Pipe or spoon meringue onto tops of cupcakes.
- 7. Bake about 7 minutes more or until meringue is lightly browned. Cool cupcakes in muffin cups on wire racks 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from muffin cups. Cool 30 to 45 minutes before serving or cover loosely and chill in the refrigerator up to 4 hours. Dust with powdered sugar before serving. Makes 15 cupcakes.

PER CUPCAKE 229 cal., 8 g fat (5 g sat. fat), 80 mg chol., 148 mg sodium, 36 g carb., 1 g fiber, 3 g pro.

PIPING HELP

If you choose to pipe the meringue onto the cupcakes, use a new plastic disposable pastry bag or a heavy-duty resealable plastic bag with a corner snipped off. Used pastry bags may contain oil residues that will cause the meringue to deflate.

CINNAMON ROLL CUPCAKES

PREP 45 minutes BAKE 18 minutes at 350°F COOL 45 minutes

- $2^{1}/_{2}$ cups all-purpose flour
- $2\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt
- 3/4 cup packed brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup finely chopped pecans
- 2 tsp. ground cinnamon
- ²/₃ cup butter, softened
- 13/4 cups granulated sugar
 - 2 eggs, room temperature
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. vanilla
- 11/4 cups milk
 - 1 recipe Fluffy Frosting
- 1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line twenty-six $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. In a medium bowl stir together flour, baking powder, and salt. In a small bowl stir together brown sugar, pecans, and cinnamon. Set aside.
- 2. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Gradually add granulated sugar, about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup at a time, beating on medium until combined, scraping sides of bowl occasionally. Beat on medium about 2 minutes more or until light and fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each. Beat in vanilla. Alternately add flour mixture and milk to butter mixture, beating on low after each just until combined (batter may look curdled).
- **3.** Spoon about 1 tablespoon of the batter into each prepared muffin cup. Sprinkle about 1 teaspoon of the brown sugar mixture over batter in cups. Spoon the remaining batter evenly over brown sugar mixture in cups. Sprinkle the remaining brown sugar mixture over batter in cups.
- **4.** Bake 18 to 20 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool cupcakes in muffin cups on wire racks 10 minutes. Remove cupcakes from muffin cups. Cool completely on wire racks.
- **5.** Spread Fluffy Frosting onto cupcakes. Store cupcakes in the refrigerator. **Makes 26 cupcakes.**

butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Beat in 1 teaspoon vanilla and dash salt. Gradually add 4 cups powdered sugar, beating until combined. Beat in ½ cup whipping cream. Beat in 4 cups additional powdered sugar. Beat in 2 to 3 tablespoons additional whipping cream until frosting is fluffy and reaches spreading consistency.

TIP If you don't have enough muffin cups or if all of the cupcakes do not fit into the oven at one time, store the remaining batter in the refrigerator while the first batch bakes.

PER CUPCAKE 403 cal., 15 g fat (9 g sat. fat), 53 mg chol., 183 mg sodium, 67 g carb., 1 g fiber, 2 g pro.



BLACK FOREST CUPCAKES

PREP 1 hour 45 minutes BAKE 18 minutes at 350°F COOL 45 minutes

- $2\frac{1}{4}$ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 3/4 tsp. baking soda
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. salt
- ²/₃ cup butter, softened
- 13/4 cups sugar
- 2 eggs, room temperature
- 3 oz. unsweetened chocolate, melted and cooled
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 cup water
- 1/4 cup Kirsch, other cherry brandy, or water
- 1 recipe Tart Cherry Filling or one 21-oz. can cherry pie filling
- 1 recipe Cocoa Butter Frosting (optional)
- Grated semisweet chocolate (optional)
- 1 recipe Sweetened Whipped Cream
- 25 maraschino cherries with stems
- 1. Preheat oven to 350° F. Line twenty-five $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. In a medium bowl stir together the first four ingredients (through salt).
- 2. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium to high 30 seconds. Gradually add sugar, about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup at a time, beating on medium until light and fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each. Beat in melted chocolate and vanilla. Alternately add flour mixture and the 1 cup water to butter mixture, beating on low after each just until combined. Stir in Kirsch.
- **3.** Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each one-half to two-thirds full. Use the back of a spoon to smooth out batter in cups.

- 4. Bake 18 to 22 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool cupcakes in muffin cups on wire racks 10 minutes. Remove cupcakes from muffin cups. Cool completely on wire racks.5. Using a spoon, scoop out a 1-inch-deep indentation from the center of each cupcake, leaving a ½-inch rim around the edge. Spoon about 1 tablespoon of the Tart Cherry Filling into the center of each cupcake. Cover and chill until serving time.
- 6. Just before serving, if desired, pipe Cocoa Butter Frosting onto the center of each cupcake. If desired, sprinkle with grated chocolate. Place Sweetened Whipped Cream in a large pastry bag fitted with an open star tip. Pipe a star onto each cupcake and top with a cherry. Makes 25 cupcakes.

 TART CHERRY FILLING In a medium saucepan stir together ¾ cup sugar and 3 tablespoons cornstarch. Stir in ⅓ cup water. Add 3 cups fresh or frozen pitted tart red cherries. Cook and stir over medium heat until thickened and bubbly. Cook and stir 2 minutes more. Remove from heat. Stir in 4 teaspoons Kirsch or cherry brandy. Cover surface with plastic wrap; cool.

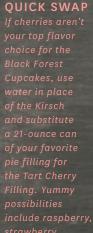
COCOA BUTTER FROSTING In a large bowl beat $\frac{1}{3}$ cup softened butter with a mixer on medium until smooth. Gradually add 1 cup powdered sugar, 2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder, and 1 ounce melted unsweetened chocolate, beating well. Beat in 2 tablespoons milk and 1 teaspoon vanilla. Slowly beat in $3\frac{1}{2}$ cups additional powdered sugar. Beat in enough additional milk until frosting reaches piping or spreading consistency. **SWETENED WHIPPED CREAM** In a chilled medium bowl combine $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups whipping cream, 2 tablespoons sugar, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons vanilla. Beat with the chilled beaters of an electric mixer on medium until soft peaks form (tips curl). Do not overbeat.

PER CUPCAKE 269 cal., 13 g fat (8 g sat. fat), 50 mg chol., 119 mg sodium, 36 g carb., 1 g fiber, 3 g pro.

LINER LESSON

Making your own cupcake liners with parchment paper (see Red Velvet Cupcakes, page 81) or waxed paper (see Jelly-Filled Doughnut Cupcakes, page 79) is easy and stylish. To start, cut out 6-inch squares of parchment or waxed paper. Press one paper square at a time into a muffin cup so the paper forms a flat bottom. Press the folds in the paper flat against the sides of the cup to create pleats. To avoid splattering batter onto the sides of the liners, spoon batter into a large resealable plastic bag and snip a small hole in one corner. While holding onto the paper liner with one hand, pipe batter into liner (about 3 tablespoons). Repeat with remaining liners and batter.











JELLY-FILLED DOUGHNUT **CUPCAKES**

PREP 35 minutes

BAKE 15 minutes at 350°F

COOL 45 minutes

2½ cups all-purpose flour

 $2\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. baking powder

½ tsp. baking soda

 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt

½ cup butter, softened

½ cup granulated sugar

½ cup packed brown sugar

 $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. vanilla

2 eggs, room temperature

1 cup milk

1 cup raspberry, strawberry, or cherry jelly; lemon curd; and/or orange marmalade

1/4 cup powdered sugar

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line eighteen $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch muffin cups with paper bake cups or waxed paper. In a medium bowl stir together the first four ingredients (through salt).

2. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium to high 30 seconds. Add granulated sugar, brown sugar, and vanilla; beat until combined, scraping sides of bowl occasionally. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each. Alternately add flour mixture and milk to butter mixture, beating on low after each just until combined.

3. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each about two-thirds full. Use the back of a spoon to smooth batter.

4. Bake 15 to 18 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool cupcakes in muffin cups on wire racks 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from muffin cups. Cool completely on wire racks.

5. Spoon jelly, lemon curd, and/or marmalade into pastry bag(s) fitted with small round tip(s). Insert tip into the top of each cupcake and squeeze the jelly, lemon curd, and/or marmalade into cupcake until some is visible on top. Dust cupcakes with powdered sugar. Makes 18 cupcakes.

PER CUPCAKE 221 cal., 6 g fat (4 g sat. fat), 38 mg chol., 207 mg sodium, 40 g carb., 1 g fiber, 3 g pro.



BOSTON CREAM PIES

PREP 30 minutes CHILL 3 hours

egg yolks

¹∕₃ cup sugar

3 Tbsp. cornstarch

 $1\frac{1}{3}$ cups milk

2 Tbsp. butter

1 tsp. vanilla

12 $2^{1}/_{2}$ -inch Vanilla Cupcakes (p. 15)

1 6-oz. pkg. semisweet chocolate pieces (1 cup)

½ cup whipping cream

1. For vanilla cream, in a small bowl lightly beat egg yolks; set aside. In a medium saucepan combine sugar and cornstarch. Whisk in milk. Cook and stir over medium heat until thickened and bubbly. Cook and stir 2 minutes more.

2. Gradually add about 1 cup of the hot mixture to the egg yolks, stirring constantly. Return all of the mixture to the saucepan. Cook and stir until bubbly. Cook and stir 2 minutes more. Remove from heat. Stir in butter until melted. Stir in vanilla. Cover surface with plastic wrap. Chill in the refrigerator at least 2 hours or up to 24 hours.

3. To assemble, using a serrated knife, cut each Vanilla Cupcake horizontally in half. Spoon 1 heaping tablespoon of the vanilla cream onto the cut side of each cupcake bottom. Replace cupcake tops. Place cupcakes on a wire rack set over waxed paper.

4. For ganache, microwave chocolate pieces and whipping cream 1 to 2 minutes or until chocolate is almost melted. Stir

5. Spoon ganache over cupcakes. Let stand just until ganache is set. Chill in the refrigerator at least 1 hour before serving. Makes 24 cupcakes.

PER CUPCAKE 401 cal., 24 g fat (14 g sat. fat), 160 mg chol., 177 mg sodium, 43 g carb., 1 g fiber, 5 g pro.



BLUEBERRY MUFFIN CUPCAKES

PREP 40 minutes

BAKE 15 minutes at 350°F

COOL 45 minutes

11/3 cups all-purpose flour

- cup cornmeal
- Tbsp. cornstarch
- tsp. baking powder
- tsp. salt
- cup butter, softened
- cup sugar
- tsp. vanilla
- eggs, room temperature
- cups fresh blueberries
- recipe Streusel Topping
- 1 recipe Vanilla Icing (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line twentyfour $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. In a medium bowl stir together the first five ingredients (through salt).

2. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium to high 30 seconds. Gradually add sugar, about 1/4 cup at a time, beating on medium about 5 minutes or until light and fluffy. Beat in vanilla. Add eggs, one at a time, beating on low to medium 1 minute after each and scraping sides of bowl frequently. Add flour mixture, stirring just until combined.

3. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each two-thirds to three-fourths full. Sprinkle blueberries over batter in muffin cups. Sprinkle with Streusel Topping. 4. Bake 15 to 18 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean (avoid

berries when inserting toothpick). Cool cupcakes in muffin cups on wire racks 10 minutes. Remove cupcakes from muffin cups. Cool completely on wire racks. If desired, drizzle cupcakes with Vanilla Icing. Makes 24 cupcakes.

STREUSEL TOPPING In a medium bowl combine 1 cup all-purpose flour, 1/3 cup packed brown sugar, 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon, and 1/8 teaspoon salt. With a pastry blender, cut in ½ cup butter until mixture resembles coarse crumbs.

VANILLA ICING In a medium bowl combine 1 tablespoon softened butter, 1½ cups powdered sugar, and ½ teaspoon vanilla. Stir in 1 to 2 tablespoons milk to make icing drizzling consistency. PER CUPCAKE 239 cal., 11 g fat

(7 g sat. fat), 62 mg chol., 152 mg sodium, 33 g carb., 1 g fiber, 3 g pro.

QUICK SWAP

Customize these cupcakes by mixing and matching your favorite berries. Swap all or part of the 1% cups blueberries with strawberries.





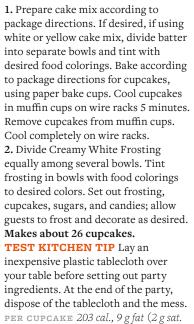




COLOR WHEEL CUPCAKES

START TO FINISH 1 hour 30 minutes

- 1 pkg. 2-layer-size white, yellow, red velvet, or chocolate cake mix
- Red, orange, yellow, green, and/or blue food colorings
- 2 cups Creamy White Frosting (p. 16) or canned creamy white frosting
- Red, orange, yellow, green, and/or blue coarse decorating sugars
- Red, orange, yellow, green, and/or blue small decorative candies



fat), 0 mg chol., 151 mg sodium, 31 g carb.,

0 g fiber, 2 g pro.









SETTING UP

Before the guests arrive, get everything prepared. Bake and cool the cupcakes, tint the frosting, and place candies and sugars in separate bowls. Lay down a disposable or easy-to-clean tablecloth. Create color stations by grouping the candies, sugars, cupcakes, and frostings by color (or mix and match colors at each station). Allow one station for each child. As they finish a cupcake of one color, rotate the group to the next station. The children can decorate as many as they like, but don't let them eat until they're finished creating! The younger the guests, the messier they will be, so supply aprons for them to wear over their party clothes.















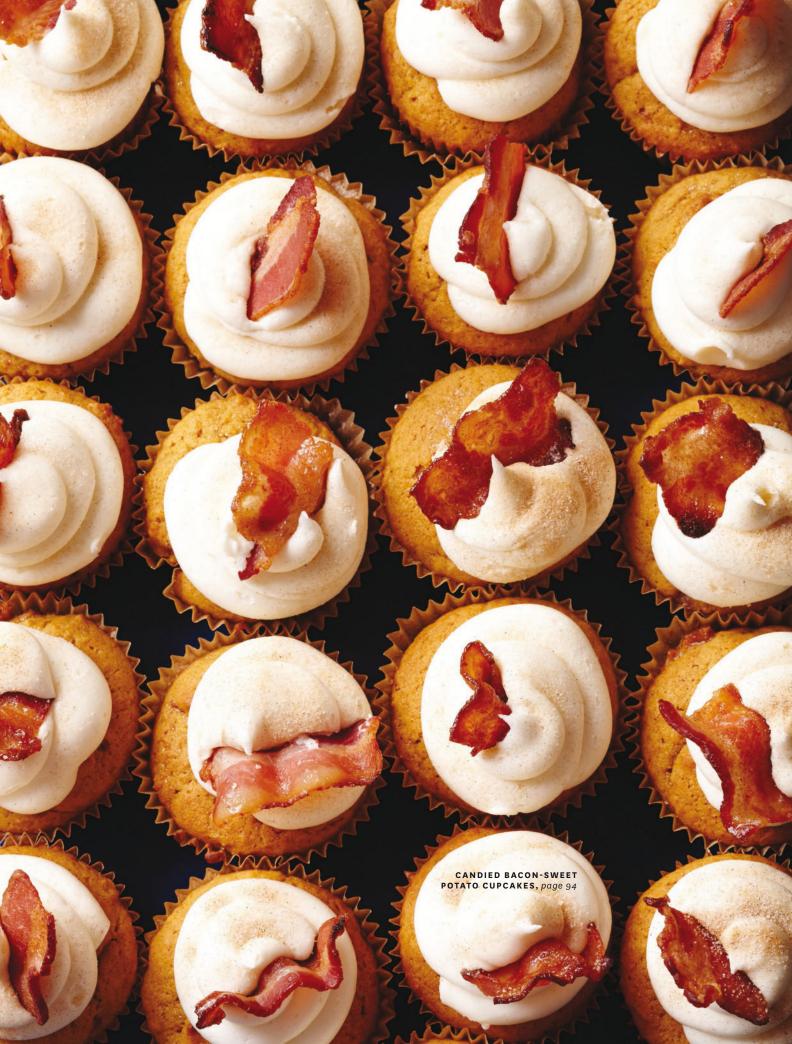
DETAILS!

Carry out the color wheel theme throughout the party. Design invitations from scrapbooking paper in hues that match the cupcake colors. For background decorations, fill plastic mock paint cans (look in crafts and hobby stores) or glass vases with different colors of candies (below). String colorful balloons throughout the bayes. You also can gather some paint swatches. the house. You also can gather some paint swatches from the hardware store to tie around gift boxes and more. For the party favors (opposite), mock paint cans or other inexpensive containers make perfect cupcake carriers. Add candy at the bottom to keep cupcakes steady on the ride home. If the kids create several cupcakes to take home, purchase cupcake gift boxes (see page 119) for easy toting.



FOR ANY OCCASION WHERE GROWN-UPS GATHER-BIRTHDAYS, ANNIVERSARIES RETIREMENTS, AND MORE-THERE'S A SOPHISTICATED CUPCAKE FLAVOR TO MAXIMIZE THE FUN: S'MORES, CHURRO, AND CANDIED BACON, TO NAME JUST A FEW.







LOUISIANA PRALINE CUPCAKES

PREP 45 minutes
BAKE 15 minutes at 325°F +
15 minutes at 350°F
COOL 45 minutes

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 1 cup coarsely chopped pecans
- 2 Tbsp. granulated sugar
- 2 Tbsp. dark-color corn syrup
- $1\frac{3}{4}$ cups all-purpose flour
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter, softened
- $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups packed brown sugar
- 2 eggs, room temperature
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 4 cup milk
- 1 recipe Praline Cream

1. Preheat oven to 325°F. Lightly coat a 9-inch square baking pan with cooking spray. Combine the next three ingredients (through corn syrup). Spread in prepared baking pan. Bake 15 minutes, stirring twice. Spread on foil to cool. Chop into small pieces. Increase oven temperature to 350°F.

2. Line twenty 2½-inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. Combine the next four ingredients (through baking soda).

3. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Gradually beat in brown sugar until combined.

Scrape bowl; beat 2 minutes more. Add eggs, one at a time, beating after each. Beat in vanilla. Add flour mixture and milk alternately, beating on low after each until well combined. Stir in 1 cup of the pecan mixture.

4. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each about two-thirds full. Bake 15 to 18 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool cupcakes in pans 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pans; cool on wire racks.

5. Place Praline Cream in a pastry bag fitted with a large round tip. Pipe a small swirl of frosting on top of each cupcake. Sprinkle with the remaining pecan mixture.

Makes 20 cupcakes.

PRALINE CREAM In a small saucepan melt 1/3 cup butter over medium-high heat. Stir in 3/4 cup packed brown sugar and 3 tablespoons milk. Bring to boiling, stirring constantly to dissolve brown sugar. Reduce heat to medium; boil gently, uncovered, 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat; stir in 1 teaspoon vanilla. Cool completely. Pour into a medium bowl; gradually stir in 11/2 cups powdered sugar until smooth and creamy. If necessary, stir in additional milk, 1 teaspoon at a time, to reach spreading consistency. PER CUPCAKE 343 cal., 19 g fat

PER CUPCAKE 343 cal., 19 g fat (9 g sat. fat), 61 mg chol., 224 mg sodium, 42 g carb., 1 g fiber, 3 g pro.

CHURRO CUPCAKES

PREP 1 hour

BAKE 18 minutes at 350°F COOL 45 minutes

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt
- 1 cup butter, softened
- 13/4 cups sugar
 - 4 eggs, room temperature
 - 1 tsp. vanilla
- ½ cup milk
- 3 Tbsp. sugar
- 2 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1 recipe Cinnamon Frosting
- Purchased churros, cut into 1-inch pieces (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line twentyfour to thirty 2½-inch muffin cups with paper bake cups; set aside. Combine the first four ingredients (through salt.) 2. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Gradually add the 11/4 cups sugar, 1/4 cup at a time, beating on medium until combined. Scrape bowl; beat 2 minutes more. Add eggs, one at a time, beating after each. Beat in vanilla. Add flour mixture and milk alternately, beating on low after each until well combined. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each about half full. Combine the 3 tablespoons sugar and the 2 teaspoons cinnamon. Sprinkle half of the cinnamon-sugar mixture over batter. 3. Bake 18 to 20 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool cupcakes in pans 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pans; cool on wire racks. 4. Spoon frosting into a large pastry bag fitted with a large star tip. Pipe frosting onto cupcakes. Sprinkle with the remaining cinnamon-sugar mixture. If desired, top each cupcake with a churro piece. Makes 24 to 30 cupcakes. **CINNAMON CREAM FROSTING In** an extra-large bowl beat 1/3 cup softened butter with a mixer on medium until smooth. Gradually add 2 cups powdered sugar, beating well. Slowly beat in 1/4 cup milk and 2 teaspoons vanilla. Gradually beat in 4 cups powdered sugar and 1 teaspoon cinnamon until smooth. PER CUPCAKE 338 cal., 13 g fat (8 g sat. fat), 62 mg chol., 197 mg sodium,

55 g carb., 0 g fiber, 3 g pro.





S'MORE CUPCAKES

PREF 40 minutes
BAKE per package directions
COOL 45 minutes

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 2 cups graham cracker crumbs
- 1/4 cup sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter, melted
- 1 pkg. 2-layer-size chocolate cake mix
- 1 recipe Marshmallow Frosting
- Graham cracker crumbs
- 32 Kisses milk chocolates, unwrapped

1. Line thirty-two $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. Coat cups with nonstick cooking spray; set aside. In a small bowl combine the next three ingredients (through butter). Spoon 1 tablespoon of the mixture into the bottom of each prepared bake cup.

Press mixture into an even layer with the back of a spoon. Prepare cake mix according to package directions. Spoon batter into cups, filling each about half full. Bake as directed. Cool cupcakes in pans 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pans; cool on wire racks. Frost tops of cupcakes with Marshmallow Frosting. Sprinkle with additional graham cracker crumbs; top with Kisses milk chocolates. Makes 32 cupcakes. **MARSHMALLOW FROSTING** In a large bowl beat 1 cup softened butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Add one 13-ounce jar marshmallow crème and 1 tablespoon clear vanilla. Beat until just combined. Gradually add $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups powdered sugar, beating until just combined.

PER CUPCAKE 274 cal., 12 g fat (12 g sat. fat), 24 mg chol., 257 mg sodium, 41 g carb., 0 g fiber, 2 g pro.





PEACHES AND CREAM CUPCAKES

PREP 25 minutes

BAKE 18 minutes at 350°F

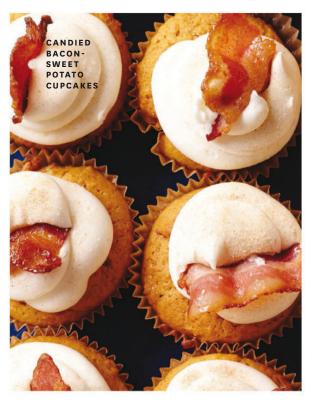
COOL 45 minutes

- 1 pkg. 2-layer-size white cake mix
- 2 eggs
- 1 6-oz. carton peach yogurt
- ²/₃ cup peach nectar
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- 1 medium peach, pitted and finely chopped, or 1 cup frozen unsweetened peach slices, thawed, well drained, and finely chopped
- 1 recipe Creamy Peach Frosting
- Peach gel food coloring
- Sugar pearl sprinkles
- 1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line twentyfour 2½-inch muffin cups with paper bake cups.
- **2.** Combine the first five ingredients (through oil). Beat with a mixer on low until combined. Beat on medium
- 2 minutes more. Fold in peach. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each about three-fourths full.
- **3.** Bake 18 to 22 minutes or until tops spring back when lightly touched. Cool cupcakes in pans 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pans; cool on wire racks.
- 4. Divide Creamy Peach Frosting in half. Use food coloring to tint one portion peach. Spoon peach-color frosting along one side of a pastry bag fitted with a large open star tip. Spoon untinted Creamy Peach Frosting along the other side of bag. Pipe frosting into swirls onto cupcakes. Top cupcakes with sugar pearl sprinkles. Makes 24 cupcakes.

CREAMY PEACH FROSTING

In an extra-large bowl beat 3/4 cup softened butter with a mixer on medium until smooth. Add 2 cups powdered sugar, beating well. Beat in ½ cup peach nectar. Gradually beat in 6 cups additional powdered sugar until smooth. Beat in enough additional peach nectar to make frosting spreading consistency.

PER CUPCAKE 353 cal., 13 g fat (5 g sat. fat), 31 mg chol., 201 mg sodium, 61 g carb., 1 g fiber, 1 g pro.



CANDIED BACON-SWEET POTATO CUPCAKES

PREP 1 hour
BAKE 12 minutes at 400°F +
20 minutes at 350°F
COOL 45 minutes

- 3 Tbsp. sugar
- 3/4 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1 lb. bacon (16 slices)
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. salt
- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1½ cups sugar
 - 3 eggs, room temperature
 - 2 large sweet potatoes, cooked and mashed (2 cups) (tip, below)
 - 1 tsp. vanilla
 - 1 recipe Bourbon-Cream Cheese Frosting

1. Preheat oven to 400° F. Combine the 3 tablespoons sugar and the

MAKE YOUR OWN MASH

For cooked, mashed sweet potatoes, scrub 2 large sweet potatoes (1½ pounds total). Prick potatoes with a fork. Wrap each potato in a paper towel and microwave about 8 to 10 minutes or until tender, turning once halfway through cooking. Cool slightly. Cut potatoes in half lengthwise. Scoop pulp from skins; discard skins. Mash pulp with a potato masher or fork. Measure 2 cups.

¾ teaspoon cinnamon; set aside. Line two shallow baking pans with foil. Cut six of the slices of bacon crosswise into fourths. Place all of the bacon on prepared baking pans; sprinkle with 2 tablespoons of the cinnamon-sugar (reserve remaining cinnamon-sugar). Bake 12 minutes or until bacon is crisp. Drain on paper towels. Set aside the quarter pieces of bacon; crumble remaining bacon slices.

2. Decrease oven temperature to 350°F. Line twenty-four $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. Combine the next five ingredients (through salt).

3. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Gradually add the $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups sugar, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup at a time, beating on medium until combined. Scrape bowl; beat 2 minutes more. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each. Beat in mashed sweet potatoes and vanilla. Add flour mixture and crumbled bacon; beat until combined (batter will be thick).

4. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups. Bake about 20 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool cupcakes in pan 10 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pans; cool on wire racks.

5. Pipe or spread Bourbon-Cream Cheese Frosting onto cupcakes.

Sprinkle cupcakes with reserved cinnamon-sugar; top with quarter pieces of bacon. Makes 24 cupcakes.

BOURBON-CREAM CHEESE

BOURBON-CREAM CHEESE FROSTING In a large bowl beat one 8-ounce package softened cream cheese and $\frac{2}{3}$ cup softened butter with a mixer on medium until light and fluffy. Beat in 2 tablespoons bourbon or milk. Gradually beat in 8 cups powdered sugar. Add enough milk, 1 teaspoon at a time, to make frosting desired consistency. PER CUPCAKE 519 cal., 25 g fat (13 g sat. fat), 88 mg chol., 680 mg sodium, 65 g carb., 1 g fiber, 10 g pro.

MOCHACCINO CUPCAKES

PREP 40 minutes
BAKE 18 minutes at 350°F
COOL 45 minutes

- $1\frac{3}{4}$ cups all-purpose flour
 - 1 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
 - 1 tsp. baking soda
- 3/4 tsp. baking powder

- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt
- 1 cup milk
- ½ cup strong brewed coffee, cooled
- 3/4 cup butter, softened
- 2 cups sugar
- 3 eggs, room temperature
- 2 tsp. vanilla
- 1 cup dark, bittersweet, or semisweet chocolate pieces
- 1 recipe Coffee Butter Frosting
- 30 crème-filled rolled wafers, such as Pirouettes, broken in half
- Unsweetened cocoa powder (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 350° F. Grease and flour thirty $2^{1}/_{2}$ -inch muffin cups or line with paper bake cups; set aside. Combine the first five ingredients (through salt). In a glass measuring cup combine milk and coffee.

2. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Gradually add sugar, ½ cup at a time, beating on medium until combined. Scrape bowl; beat 2 minutes more. Add eggs, one at a time, beating after each. Beat in vanilla. Add flour mixture and milk mixture alternately, beating on low after each until well combined. Stir in chocolate pieces.

3. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each about three-fourths full.

4. Bake 18 minutes or until tops spring

back when lightly touched. Cool cupcakes in pans 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pans; cool on wire racks.

5. Spoon Coffee Butter Frosting into a pastry bag fitted with a star tip.

Pipe frosting onto cupcakes. Insert wafer halves. If desired, dust with cocoa powder. Makes 30 cupcakes.

COFFEE BUTTER FROSTING

In a large bowl beat $\frac{1}{3}$ cup softened butter with a mixer on medium until smooth. Gradually add 1 cup powdered sugar, beating well. Beat in 3 tablespoons strong brewed coffee, cooled, and 1 teaspoon vanilla. Gradually beat in 3 cups additional powdered sugar. If necessary, beat in additional coffee until frosting reaches spreading consistency.

PER CUPCAKE 285 cal., 12 g fat (6 g sat. fat), 42 mg chol., 167 mg sodium, 45 g carb., 2 g fiber, 3 g pro.





CRANBERRY-CHAI CUPCAKES

PREP 40 minutes
BAKE 15 minutes at 350°F
COOL 45 minutes

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 Tbsp. Chai Spice Seasoning
- 1½ tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter, softened
- 11/2 cups sugar
 - 2 eggs, room temperature
- ½ tsp. vanilla
- $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups buttermilk or sour milk (tip, p. 37)
- 3/4 cup chopped fresh or frozen cranberries
- 1 recipe Chai Cream Cheese Frosting
- Sugared Cranberries (optional)
- 1. Preheat oven to 350° F. Line twenty to twenty-four $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. Combine the first five ingredients (through salt).
- 2. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Gradually add sugar, ½ cup at a time, beating on medium until combined. Scrape bowl; beat 2 minutes more. Add eggs, one at a time, beating after each. Beat in vanilla. Add flour mixture and buttermilk alternately, beating on low after each until well combined. Stir in chopped cranberries.
- **3.** Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each about two-thirds full.

4. Bake 15 to 20 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool cupcakes in pans 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pans; cool on wire racks. 5. Frost with Chai Cream Cheese Frosting. If desired, top with Sugared Cranberries. Store frosted cupcakes in the refrigerator. Makes 20 to 24 cupcakes. **CHAI SPICE SEASONING Using** an electric spice grinder, small food processor, or clean coffee grinder, finely grind 1 teaspoon fennel seeds and 1 teaspoon whole cloves. Transfer to a small bowl. Stir in 2 teaspoons ground cardamom, 1 teaspoon ground ginger, 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon, and dash freshly ground black pepper. Store in an airtight container in a cool, dry place up to 1 month.

CHAI CREAM CHEESE FROSTING In a large bowl beat 6 ounces softened cream cheese, ½ cup softened butter, 1½ teaspoons Chai Spice Seasoning, and 1½ teaspoons vanilla with a mixer on medium until light and fluffy. Gradually beat in 11/2 cups powdered sugar. Gradually beat in $2\frac{1}{2}$ to $2\frac{3}{4}$ cups additional powdered sugar until frosting reaches spreading consistency. SUGARED CRANBERRIES To make your cranberries look frosty, simply roll frozen cranberries in granulated sugar. Place on waxed paper until ready to use. PER CUPCAKE 312 cal., 11 g fat (7 g sat. fat), 51 mg chol., 193 mg sodium, 51 g carb., 1 g fiber, 3 g pro.





ORANGE **ON TOP**

Look for candied orange wedges or slices with other dried fruit. Can't find them? You can also use candied orange peel or simply garnish with thin strips of fresh orange peel.

CHOCOLATE-ORANGE CUPCAKES

PREP 30 minutes BAKE 18 minutes at 350°F COOL 45 minutes

- 2 oranges
- 1 8-oz. pkg. reduced-fat cream cheese (neufchatel), softened
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 4 eggs, room temperature
- 1 pkg. 2-layer-size devil's food cake mix
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1 recipe Buttery Orange Frosting
- Dried candied orange wedges (optional)
- Melted chocolate (optional)
- 1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line twenty-four $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. Remove 2 tablespoons zest from oranges. Squeeze juice from oranges; add enough water to juice to equal 1 cup total liquid.
- 2. Beat cream cheese and sugar with a mixer on medium. Beat in one of the eggs; stir in 1 tablespoon of the orange zest (set aside remaining orange zest for frosting).
- 3. In a large bowl combine cake mix, oil, orange juice mixture, and the remaining three eggs. Beat with a mixer on low 30 seconds. Scrape bowl; beat on medium 2 minutes more. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each about three-fourths full. Drop a slightly rounded teaspoon of the cream cheese mixture into each batter-filled muffin cup.
- 4. Bake 18 to 22 minutes or until tops spring back when lightly touched. Cool cupcakes in pans 10 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pans; cool on wire racks. Spread Buttery Orange Frosting onto tops of cupcakes. If desired, dip candied orange wedges into melted chocolate; let stand on waxed paper until chocolate is set. Top each cupcake with a chocolate-dipped candied orange wedge. Makes 24 cupcakes. **BUTTERY ORANGE FROSTING** In a medium bowl beat ³/₄ cup softened butter with a mixer on medium until smooth. Add 1 cup powdered sugar, beating well. Beat in 1 tablespoon half-and-half or milk and the remaining 1 tablespoon orange zest from cupcakes. Beat in additional 1½ cups powdered

milk to make frosting spreading consistency. PER CUPCAKE 275 cal., 15 g fat (6 g sat. fat), 58 mg chol.,

sugar. If necessary, beat in enough additional half-and-half or

256 mg sodium, 34 g carb., 1 g fiber, 3 g pro.

ISLAND BANANAS FOSTER CUPCAKES

PREP 35 minutes $\,$ BAKE 20 minutes at 350°F cool 45 minutes

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt
- 1 cup butter, softened
- 11/2 cups sugar
 - 3 eggs, room temperature
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. vanilla
- 3/4 cup unsweetened coconut milk
- 3/4 cup shredded coconut, lightly toasted
- 1/4 cup rum or unsweetened coconut milk
- 1 recipe Bananas Foster Topping
- Whipped cream (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line twenty-four $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. Combine the first three ingredients (through salt).

- 2. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Add sugar, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup at a time, beating on medium until combined. Scrape bowl; beat 2 minutes more. Add eggs, one at a time, beating after each. Beat in vanilla. Add flour mixture and coconut milk alternately, beating on low after each until well combined. Fold in the $\frac{3}{4}$ cup coconut and the rum.
- **3.** Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each about three-fourths full.
- 4. Bake 20 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool cupcakes in pans 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pans; cool on wire racks.
- 5. Spoon Bananas Foster Topping onto cupcakes. If desired, pipe whipped cream onto cupcakes and sprinkle with additional toasted coconut. **Makes 24 cupcakes.**BANANAS FOSTER TOPPING In a large skillet melt ½ cup butter over medium heat. Stir in ½ cup packed brown sugar, ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon, and, if desired, ½ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg. Add 3 bananas, sliced; toss gently to coat. Cook and stir 1 to 2 minutes or until bananas are heated through. Meanwhile, in a small saucepan heat ¼ cup rum over low heat just until rum almost simmers; remove from heat. If desired, use a long match to carefully ignite the rum. Once the flame dies down, pour rum into banana mixture. Gently stir in ½ teaspoon vanilla.

 PER CUPCAKE 263 cal., 14 g fat (9 g sat. fat), 54 mg chol., 173 mg sodium, 31 g carb., 1 g fiber, 3 g pro.

HOT ON TOP

Bananas
Foster Topping
is very hot
when first
removed from
the stove
and will melt
the whipped
cream when
you pipe it on
top. To prevent
this, cool
the mixture
slightly.

STAY SAFE

Keep your face and hands away from ignited rum in the saucepan. (The flame is hard to see.) Leave the pan on an unlit stove burner until the flame dies down.





COCKTAILS

SUGAR AND SPICE ARE NICE, BUT NOTHING KICKS CUPCAKES INTO HIGH GEAR LIKE A SPLASH OF LIQUEUR. SPOIL YOURSELF WITH THESE SUMPTUOUS SWEETS AND THEIR COCKTAIL COMPANIONS.





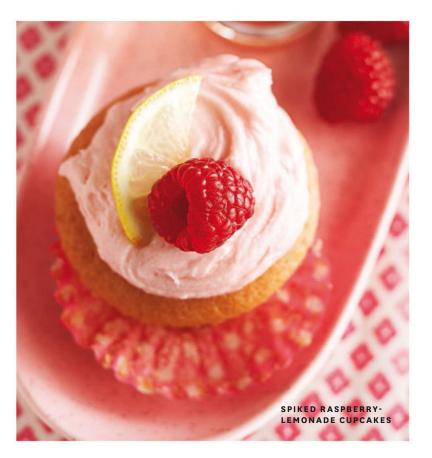
BLACK-AND-WHITE IRISH CREAM CUPCAKES

PREP 40 minutes STAND 30 minutes
BAKE 20 minutes at 350°F COOL 45 minutes

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter, softened
- 1³/₄ cups sugar
 - 3 Tbsp. Irish cream liqueur
 - 4 egg whites, room temperature
 - 1 tsp. vanilla
- $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups buttermilk or sour milk (tip, p. 37)
 - 3 oz. bittersweet chocolate, melted and cooled
 - 1 recipe Irish Cream Ganache
 - 1 recipe Irish Cream Icing
 - Chocolate-covered coffee beans, chopped (optional)
- 1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line twenty-eight $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. In a medium bowl stir together the first four ingredients (through salt).
- 2. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium to high 30 seconds. Add sugar, liqueur, and vanilla. Beat until combined, scraping sides of bowl occasionally. Add egg whites, one at a time, beating well after each. Alternately add flour mixture and buttermilk to butter mixture, beating on low after each just until combined.
- 3. Transfer half of the batter (about $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups) to a medium bowl; stir in melted chocolate. Fill each prepared muffin cup about two-thirds full, spooning chocolate batter into one side of cup and white batter into other side of cup.
- **4.** Bake about 20 minutes or until tops spring back when lightly touched. Cool cupcakes in muffin cups on wire racks 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from muffin cups. Cool completely on wire racks.
- **5.** Spread top of each cupcake with Irish Cream Ganache; add a small spoonful of Irish Cream Icing. If desired, top with chocolate-covered coffee beans. **Makes 28 cupcakes.**

IRISH CREAM GANACHE In a small saucepan bring ½ cup whipping cream just to boiling over medium-high heat. Remove from heat. Add 6 ounces chopped bittersweet chocolate (do not stir). Let stand 5 minutes. Stir in 1 tablespoon Irish cream liqueur until smooth. Gool about 20 minutes or until thickened. Makes about 1 cup. IRISH CREAM ICING In a small bowl stir together 1 cup powdered sugar, 1 tablespoon Irish cream liqueur, and ¼ teaspoon vanilla. Makes about ½ cup.

PER CUPCAKE 203 cal., 9 g fat (6 g sat. fat), 16 mg chol., 124 mg sodium, 30 g carb., 1 g fiber, 3 g pro.



SPIKED RASPBERRY-LEMONADE CUPCAKES

PREP 40 minutes STAND 30 minutes BAKE 15 minutes at 350°F COOL 45 minutes

13/4 cups all-purpose flour

- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1/4 tsp. baking soda
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 4 cup butter, softened
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups sugar
 - 2 tsp. finely shredded lemon peel
 - 2 Tbsp. lemon juice
 - 2 Tbsp. raspberry liqueur or milk
 - 3 eggs, room temperature
- $^{2}/_{3}$ cup buttermilk or sour milk (tip, p.37)
- Red food coloring
- 1 recipe Creamy Raspberry Frosting
- Lemon slices (optional)
- Fresh raspberries (optional)

Preheat oven to 350°F. Line eighteen 2½-inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. In a medium bowl stir together the first four ingredients (through salt).
 In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium to high 30 seconds. Add sugar, lemon peel, lemon juice, and liqueur; beat until combined, scraping sides of bowl occasionally. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each.

Alternately add flour mixture and buttermilk to butter mixture, beating on low after each just until combined. Tint batter pink with a few drops of red food coloring.

- **3.** Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each about three-fourths full. Use the back of a spoon to smooth out batter in cups.
- 4. Bake 15 to 18 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool cupcakes in muffin cups on wire racks 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from muffin cups. Cool completely on wire racks.
- **5.** Spread Creamy Raspberry Frosting onto tops of cupcakes. If desired, top with lemon slices and/or raspberries. **Makes 18 cupcakes.**

CREAMY RASPBERRY FROSTING

In a large bowl beat $\frac{3}{4}$ cup softened butter with a mixer on medium until smooth. Gradually add 2 cups powdered sugar, beating well. Beat in 3 tablespoons milk, 3 tablespoons raspberry liqueur or milk, and 5 drops red food coloring. Gradually beat in 5 to $5\frac{1}{2}$ cups additional powdered sugar until frosting reaches spreading or piping consistency.

PER CUPCAKE 455 cal., 16 g fat (10 g sat. fat), 77 mg chol., 202 mg sodium, 75 g carb., 0 g fiber, 3 g pro.



HAZELNUT CRÈME BRÛLÉE CUPCAKES

PREP 45 minutes STAND 30 minutes
BAKE 15 minutes at 350°F COOL 45 minutes

- 2½ cups all-purpose flour
 - 2 tsp. baking powder
 - 1/2 tsp. salt
- 3/4 cup butter, softened
- 13/4 cups sugar
 - 3 eggs, room temperature
 - 2 Tbsp. hazelnut liqueur
 - 2 tsp. vanilla
 - 1 cup milk
- ½ cup finely chopped, toasted hazelnuts
- 1 recipe Vanilla-Hazelnut Buttercream
- 1 recipe Caramelized Sugar Drizzle
- Freshly grated nutmeg (optional)
- 1. Preheat oven to 350° F. Line twenty-four $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. In a medium bowl stir together flour, baking powder, and salt.
- 2. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium to high 30 seconds. Gradually add sugar, about ½ cup at a time, beating on medium until combined. Scrape sides of bowl; beat 2 minutes more. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each. Beat in liqueur and vanilla. Alternately add flour mixture and milk to butter mixture, beating on low after each just until combined. Fold in nuts.
- 3. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each about three-fourths full. Use the back of a spoon to smooth out batter in cups.
- **4.** Bake 15 to 18 minutes or until tops spring back when lightly touched. Cool cupcakes in muffin cups on wire racks 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from muffin cups. Cool completely on wire racks.
- **5.** Spread or pipe Vanilla-Hazelnut Buttercream onto tops of cupcakes. Quickly drizzle with Caramelized Sugar Drizzle. If desired, lightly sprinkle cupcakes with nutmeg.

Makes 24 cupcakes.

VANILLA-HAZELNUT BUTTERCREAM In a large bowl beat $\frac{1}{3}$ cup softened butter with a mixer on medium until smooth. Gradually add 1 cup powdered sugar, beating well. Beat in 2 tablespoons milk, 1 tablespoon hazelnut liqueur, and 1 teaspoon vanilla. Gradually beat in 3 cups additional powdered sugar. Beat in additional milk (3 to 4 teaspoons) until buttercream reaches spreading consistency.

CARAMELIZED SUGAR DRIZZLE In a large skillet cook $\frac{1}{3}$ cup sugar over medium-high heat until sugar starts to melt, shaking skillet occasionally. Do not stir. When sugar starts to melt, reduce heat to low and cook about 5 minutes or until all of the sugar is melted, stirring as necessary with a wooden spoon. Remove from heat. Immediately drizzle melted sugar over frosted cupcakes.

PER CUPCAKE 306 cal., 11 g fat (6 g sat. fat), 49 mg chol., 152 mg sodium, 49 g carb., 1 g fiber, 3 g pro.



GRASSHOPPER CUPCAKES

Pictured on page 105.

PREP 40 minutes STAND 30 minutes
BAKE 20 minutes at 350°F COOL 45 minutes

- 11/4 cups milk
 - 4 oz. sweet baking chocolate, chopped
 - 2 cups all-purpose flour
 - 1 tsp. baking soda
- 3/4 tsp. baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt
- 3/4 cup butter, softened
- 1½ cups sugar
 - 3 eggs, room temperature
 - 3 Tbsp. green or white crème de menthe
 - 1 tsp. vanilla
 - 1 recipe Grasshopper Frosting
 - Kisses milk chocolates, unwrapped
- 1. Preheat oven to 350°F. In a small saucepan combine milk and chocolate. Cook and stir over medium-low heat until chocolate is melted; cool.
- 2. Grease and flour twenty-eight $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch muffin cups or line with paper bake cups. In a medium bowl stir together the next four ingredients (through salt).
- 3. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium to high 30 seconds. Gradually add sugar, beating on medium until combined. Beat 2 minutes more, scraping sides of bowl occasionally. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each. Beat in crème de menthe and vanilla. Alternately add flour mixture and chocolate mixture, beating on low after each just until combined. Beat on medium to high 20 seconds more. Spoon batter into prepared cups, filling each about three-fourths full.
- **4.** Bake about 20 minutes or until tops spring back when lightly touched. Cool in pans on wire racks 5 minutes. Remove from pans; cool completely on wire racks.
- **5.** Spread or pipe Grasshopper Frosting onto tops of cupcakes. Top each with a chocolate kiss. **Makes 28 cupcakes.**

GRASSHOPPER FROSTING In a 1-cup measuring cup combine 2 tablespoons cold water and 1 tablespoon unflavored gelatin. Let stand 2 minutes. Place measuring cup in a saucepan of boiling water. Cook and stir 1 minute or until gelatin is completely dissolved. In a large bowl combine 2 cups whipping cream, ½ cup sugar, and 2 tablespoons green or white crème de menthe. If using white crème de menthe, add 1 or 2 drops green food coloring. Drizzle warm gelatin mixture over cream mixture while beating constantly with a mixer on medium. Continue beating on medium to high until stiff peaks form (tips stand straight).

PER CUPCAKE 248 cal., 15 g fat (9 g sat. fat), 61 mg chol., 154 mg sodium, 27 g carb., 1 g fiber, 3 g pro.

MARBLED ALMOND CUPCAKES

PREP 40 minutes STAND 30 minutes
BAKE 15 minutes at 350°F COOL 45 minutes

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt
- ½ cup shortening
- 13/4 cups sugar
 - 3 Tbsp. amaretto
 - 1 tsp. vanilla
 - 4 egg whites, room temperature
 - 1 cup buttermilk or sour milk (tip, p. 37)
 - 2 Tbsp. unsweetened cocoa powder
 - 1 to 2 Tbsp. amaretto
 - 1 recipe Marbled Almond Frosting
- 1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line twenty $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. In a medium bowl stir together the first four ingredients (through salt).
- 2. In a large bowl beat shortening with a mixer on medium to high 30 seconds. Add sugar, the 3 tablespoons amaretto, and the vanilla; beat until combined, scraping sides of bowl occasionally. Add egg whites, one at a time, beating well after each. Alternately add flour mixture and buttermilk to shortening mixture, beating on low after each just until combined.
- 3. Transfer $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups of the batter to a small bowl; stir in cocoa powder. Spoon white batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each about one-third full. Spoon about 1 tablespoon chocolate batter into each muffin cup. Top with the remaining white batter; swirl gently to marble.
- 4. Bake 15 to 18 minutes or until tops spring back when lightly touched. Cool cupcakes in muffin cups on wire racks 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from muffin cups. Prick tops of warm cupcakes with a fork. Brush tops with the 1 to 2 tablespoons amaretto. Cool completely on wire racks.
 5. Working with Marbled Almond Frosting, place the white frosting and the chocolate frosting side by side in a large
- frosting and the chocolate frosting side by side in a large pastry bag fitted with a large star tip. Pipe frosting onto tops of cupcakes. **Makes 20 cupcakes.**

MARBLED ALMOND FROSTING In a large bowl beat 1 cup shortening and 2 tablespoons amaretto with a mixer on medium until smooth. Gradually add $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups powdered sugar, beating well. Beat in 2 tablespoons milk. Gradually beat in $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups additional powdered sugar. Beat in additional milk (1 to 2 tablespoons) until frosting reaches piping consistency. Transfer half of the frosting to a medium bowl; stir in 3 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder.

PER CUPCAKE 364 cal., 15 g fat (4 g sat. fat), 1 mg chol.,

PER CUPCAKE 364 cal., 15 g fat (4 g sat. fat), 1 mg chol., 133 mg sodium, 54 g carb., 1 g fiber, 3 g pro.











BUTTERFINGER CUPCAKES

PREP 1 hour

BAKE 18 minutes at 350°F

COOL 45 minutes

2½ cups all-purpose flour

2½ tsp. baking powder

 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt

3/4 cup butter, softened

13/4 cups sugar

3 eggs, room temperature

 $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. vanilla

11/4 cups milk

3/4 cup crushed Butterfinger candy bars (about two 1.9-oz. bars)

1 recipe Peanut Butter Frosting

Coarsely chopped Butterfinger candy bars

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line twentyfour 2½-inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. Combine the first three ingredients (through salt). 2. In a large bowl beat butter with

a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Gradually beat in sugar, 1/4 cup at a time, until combined. Scrape bowl; beat 2 minutes more. Add eggs, one at a time, beating after each. Beat in vanilla. Add flour mixture and milk alternately, beating on low after each until combined. Stir in the 3/4 cup crushed candy bars. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each about two-thirds full.

3. Bake 18 to 20 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool in pan 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pan; cool on a wire rack. Spoon frosting into a pastry bag fitted with a large star tip. Pipe frosting onto cupcakes. Sprinkle with additional chopped candy bars. Makes 24 cupcakes.

PEANUT BUTTER FROSTING

In a large bowl beat 8 ounces softened cream cheese, 3/4 cup peanut butter, ½ cup softened butter, and 1 tablespoon vanilla with a mixer on medium until light and fluffy. Gradually add 2 cups powdered sugar, beating well. Gradually beat in 4 cups additional powdered sugar. If necessary, beat in 1 to 2 tablespoons milk to reach piping consistency.

PER CUPCAKE 435 cal., 19 g fat (10 g sat. fat), 60 mg chol., 276 mg sodium, 63 g carb., 1 g fiber, 5 g pro.

SNICKERS CUPCAKES

PREP 1 hour 15 minutes BAKE 18 minutes at 350°F COOL 45 minutes

1½ cups all-purpose flour

2 tsp. baking powder

½ tsp. baking soda

 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt

1/3 cup butter, softened

1/3 cup peanut butter

1 cup packed brown sugar

2 eggs, room temperature

1 tsp. vanilla

1 cup buttermilk or sour milk (tip, p. 37)

1 cup chopped Snickers candy bars

1 recipe Caramel Frosting

cup semisweet chocolate pieces, melted (optional)

Chopped Snickers candy bars

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line twenty to twenty-two 2½-inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. Combine the first four ingredients (through salt).

2. In a large bowl beat butter and peanut butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Beat in brown sugar, ½ cup at a time, until combined. Scrape bowl; beat 2 minutes more. Add eggs, one at a time, beating after each. Beat in vanilla. Add flour mixture and buttermilk alternately, beating on low after each until well combined. Stir in the 1 cup chopped candy bars. Spoon into prepared muffin cups, filling each about two-thirds full. 3. Bake 18 to 20 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool in pan

5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pan; cool on a wire rack. Spoon Caramel Frosting into a pastry bag fitted with a large star tip. Pipe frosting onto cupcakes. If desired, drizzle melted chocolate over frosting. Sprinkle with additional chopped candy bars. Makes 20 to 22 cupcakes.

CARAMEL FROSTING In a large bowl beat 3/4 cup softened butter with a mixer on medium until smooth. Gradually add 2 cups powdered sugar, beating well. Slowly beat in ½ cup purchased caramel ice cream topping and 1/4 teaspoon salt. Gradually beat in an additional 6 cups powdered sugar. Beat in 4 to 5 tablespoons milk to reach piping consistency. PER CUPCAKE 465 cal., 15 g fat (8 g sat. fat), 47 mg chol., 336 mg sodium, 80 g carb., 1 g fiber, 4 g pro.

MOUNDS BAR CUPCAKES

PREP 45 minutes

BAKE 18 minutes at 350°F

COOL 45 minutes

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups buttermilk or sour milk (tip, p. 37)
 - 1 tsp. vanilla
- ½ cup butter, softened
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups sugar
 - 3 eggs, room temperature
- 12 to 15 snack-size Mounds candy bars, halved
- 1 recipe Chocolate Glaze
- Chopped Mounds candy bars
- Flaked coconut
- 1. Preheat oven to 350° F. Line thirty-two $2^{1}/_{2}$ -inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. In a medium bowl combine the first four ingredients (through salt). In a measuring cup combine buttermilk and vanilla; set aside.
- 2. In a large bowl beat butter on medium 30 seconds. Gradually beat in sugar, ½ cup at a time, until combined. Scrape bowl; beat 2 minutes more. Add eggs, one at a time, beating after each. Add flour mixture and buttermilk mixture alternately, beating on low after each until well combined. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each about half full. Place a candy bar half in each muffin cup. Press down slightly.
- **3.** Bake 18 to 20 minutes or until tops spring back when lightly touched. Cool in pan 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pan; cool on a wire rack.
- **4.** Spoon Chocolate Glaze over tops of cupcakes. Sprinkle with chopped candy bars and flaked coconut. Let stand until set. **Makes 32 cupcakes.**

CHOCOLATE GLAZE In a small saucepan bring ½ cup whipping cream and 1 tablespoon light-color corn syrup to a simmer over medium heat. Remove from heat; add 1 cup semisweet chocolate pieces. Cover; let stand 5 minutes. Whisk until smooth.

PER CUPCAKE 179 cal., 7 g fat (5 g sat. fat), 23 mg chol., 136 mg sodium, 28 g carb., 2 g fiber, 3 g pro.

HEATH BAR CUPCAKES

PREP 1 hour

BAKE 18 minutes at 350°F

COOL 45 minutes

- 13/4 cups all-purpose flour
 - 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 3/4 cup butter, softened
- 11/2 cups sugar
 - 4 eggs, room temperature
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- ½ cup milk
- 8 oz. milk chocolate, melted and slightly cooled
- 3/4 cup chocolate-covered English toffee pieces
- 1 recipe Toffee Frosting
- Coarsely chopped or broken Heath bars
- 1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line twentyfour 2½-inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. Combine the first three ingredients (through salt).
- 2. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Beat in sugar, ½ cup at a time, until combined. Scrape bowl; beat 2 minutes more. Add eggs, one at a time, beating after each. Beat in vanilla. Add flour mixture and milk alternately, beating on low after each until well combined. Stir in melted chocolate just until combined. Stir in the ¾ cup toffee pieces. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each about two-thirds full.
- 3. Bake 18 to 20 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool in cups 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pan; cool on a wire rack.
- 4. Spread Toffee Frosting over cooled cupcakes. Sprinkle with coarsely chopped candy bars. Makes 24 cupcakes.

TOFFEE FROSTING In a medium saucepan combine $\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter and 1 cup packed dark brown sugar. Cook and stir over medium heat until butter and sugar are melted. Cook and stir 2 minutes more. Remove from heat. Stir in $\frac{2}{3}$ cup half-and-half or light cream. Return to heat and cook 1 minute more. Remove from heat and cool 20 minutes. Whisk in $2\frac{3}{4}$ cups powdered sugar. Cover and chill 1 hour or until frosting reaches spreading consistency.

PER CUPCAKE 402 cal., 19 g fat (11 g sat. fat), 66 mg chol., 202 mg sodium, 57 g

carb., 1 g fiber, 3 g pro.

















The little details will make your guests feel pampered. Here's how to get started:

- Pick your party colors. Look for ribbons, centerpieces, and scrapbooking papers to match.
- Design your invitations and place settings from scrapbooking paper; mail or deliver invites.
- Suggest each guest bring one to two dozen simply designed cupcakes. (If the design is elaborate, they may be hard to transport.)
- Provide cupcake gift boxes at each place setting for guests to tote cupcakes home.
- Offer guests an array of beverages, such as punch, coffee, bottled water, and cocktails.
- Set out a few savory snacks, such as salted nuts or snack mixes—they provide a nice counterpoint to the cupcakes guests will likely be nibbling and sampling.







PEANUT BUTTER-CHOCOLATE TWIST CUPCAKES

PREP 45 minutes

BAKE 15 minutes at 375°F

COOL 45 minutes

2½ cups all-purpose flour

21/2 tsp. baking powder

 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt

½ cup butter, softened

1/3 cup creamy peanut butter

1 cup packed brown sugar

3/4 cup granulated sugar

3 eggs, room temperature

1½ tsp. vanilla

1 cup milk

4 oz. milk chocolate, melted

1 recipe Peanut Butter Frosting

1 recipe Chocolate Frosting

 Shaved milk chocolate and/or bite-size chocolate-covered peanut butter cups, halved

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Line thirty-four to thirty-six 2½-inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. In a medium bowl combine flour, baking powder, and salt.
2. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium to high 30 seconds. Add peanut butter; beat until combined. Gradually add brown sugar and

granulated sugar, about ½ cup at a time, beating on medium until combined.

Scrape sides of bowl; beat about 2 minutes more or until fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each. Beat in vanilla. Alternately add flour mixture and milk to butter mixture, beating on low after each just until combined.

3. Transfer half of the batter to a separate bowl; add melted chocolate. Beat on low just until combined.

4. Fill prepared muffin cups by alternating spoonfuls of peanut butter batter and chocolate batter, filling each cup about two-thirds full. Use a butter knife to swirl batter in each cup.

5. Bake 15 to 18 minutes or until

a toothpick comes out clean. Cool cupcakes in muffin cups on wire racks 5 minutes. Remove from muffin cups. Cool completely on wire racks.

6. Fit a pastry bag with a round or star tip. Spoon Peanut Butter Frosting along one side of the bag; spoon Chocolate Frosting along the other side of the bag (frostings will be side by side in the bag). Pipe frostings in swirls onto cupcakes. Top with shaved chocolate and/or peanut butter cup halves. Makes 34 to 36 cupcakes.

peanut butter frosting In a large bowl beat one 8-ounce package softened cream cheese, ½ cup creamy peanut butter, and 2 teaspoons vanilla with a mixer on medium until light and fluffy. Gradually beat in 6 cups powdered sugar. Beat in enough milk, 1 teaspoon at a time, until frosting reaches piping consistency. Divide frosting into two portions. Set aside one portion for Chocolate Frosting (see recipe, below).

chocolate frosting In a medium bowl combine one portion of the Peanut Butter Frosting (see recipe, above) and 4 ounces milk chocolate, melted and cooled. Beat with a mixer on medium until combined. If necessary, beat in enough powdered sugar or milk until frosting reaches piping consistency.

PER CUPCAKE 293 cal., 11 g fat

(5 g sat. fat), 36 mg chol., 149 mg sodium, 45 g carb., 1 g fiber, 4 g pro.



LEMON DROP CUPCAKES

PREP 40 minutes BAKE 18 minutes at 350°F COOL 45 minutes

- 13/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1/4 tsp. baking soda
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. salt
- ²/₃ cup milk
- 1/4 cup limoncello (Italian lemon liqueur) or milk
- 3/4 cup butter, softened
- 1½ cups sugar
 - 1 Tbsp. finely shredded lemon peel
 - 3 eggs, room temperature
 - 1 recipe Lemon Frosting
- ½ cup lemon drop candies, finely crushed
- 1 recipe Glazed Lemon Slices
- 1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line twenty $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. In a medium bowl stir together the first four ingredients (through salt). In a 2-cup glass measuring cup combine milk and limoncello. Set aside.
- 2. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium to high 30 seconds. Add sugar and lemon peel; beat until combined. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each. Alternately add flour mixture and milk mixture to butter mixture, beating on low after each just until combined.
- 3. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each about three-fourths full. Use the back of a spoon to smooth out batter in cups. Bake about 18 minutes or until tops spring back when lightly touched. Cool cupcakes in muffin cups on wire racks 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from muffin cups. Cool completely on wire racks.
- 4. Up to 1 hour before serving, generously spread or pipe Lemon Frosting onto cupcakes. Sprinkle crushed candies over frosted cupcakes. Top cupcakes with Glazed Lemon Slices. Makes 20 cupcakes.

LEMON FROSTING In a large bowl beat ½ cup softened butter, ½ cup shortening, and 1 teaspoon vanilla with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Slowly add 2 cups powdered sugar, beating well. Add 2 tablespoons lemon juice. Gradually beat in 2 cups additional powdered sugar. Beat in 1 to 2 tablespoons milk, 1 teaspoon at a time, until frosting reaches spreading consistency.

GLAZED LEMON SLICES Cut 2 small lemons into 1/4-inchthick slices. Remove seeds. Roll slices in sugar to coat well. Coat a large skillet with nonstick cooking spray. Preheat skillet over medium-high heat. Arrange lemon slices in a single layer in skillet. Cook 6 to 8 minutes or until sugar dissolves and lemon slices appear glazed (do not let them brown), turning once. Transfer to a piece of foil; cool completely. Roll cooled slices in sugar again before using. (These slices are edible, but the rind is chewy; if desired, remove slices before eating.)

PER CUPCAKE 350 cal., 14 g fat (7 g sat. fat), 59 mg chol., 150 mg sodium, 53 g carb., 0 g fiber, 2 g pro.



CHERRY-ALMOND VANILLA CUPCAKES

PREP 40 minutes

BAKE 15 minutes at 350°F

COOL 45 minutes

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. baking soda
- 3/4 cup buttermilk or sour milk (tip, p. 37)
- 1/3 cup maraschino cherry juice
- ½ cup butter, softened
- 1½ cups sugar
 - 4 egg whites, room temperature
 - 1 tsp. vanilla
- ½ tsp. almond extract
- 12 maraschino cherries, halved
- 1 recipe Cherry-Almond Butter Frosting
- Maraschino cherries with stems

- 1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line twentyfour $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch muffin cups with paper bake cups; set aside. In a medium bowl stir together the first four ingredients (through baking soda). In a 2-cup glass measuring cup combine buttermilk and cherry juice.
- 2. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium to high 30 seconds. Gradually add sugar, about 1/4 cup at a time, beating on medium until combined. Add egg whites, one at a time, beating well after each. Beat in vanilla and almond extract. Alternately add flour mixture and buttermilk mixture to butter mixture, beating on low after each just until combined.
- 3. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each about two-thirds full. Use the back of a spoon to smooth out batter in cups. Press a cherry half into batter in each cup to cover completely.

4. Bake 15 to 18 minutes or until tops spring back when lightly touched. Cool cupcakes in muffin cups on wire racks 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from muffin cups. Cool completely on racks. **5.** Place Cherry-Almond Butter Frosting in a pastry bag fitted with a large star tip. Pipe frosting onto tops of cupcakes. Top with cherries with stems. Makes 24 cupcakes.

CHERRY-ALMOND BUTTER FROSTING In a large bowl beat 1 cup softened butter with a mixer on medium until smooth. Gradually add 2 cups powdered sugar, beating well. Gradually beat in 6 tablespoons maraschino cherry juice or milk and ½ teaspoon almond extract. Gradually beat in 6 cups additional powdered sugar until combined. If necessary, beat in additional cherry juice or milk, 1 teaspoon at a time, to reach spreading consistency. If desired, tint with red or pink food coloring. PER CUPCAKE 262 cal., 8 g fat 47 g carb., 0 g fiber, 2 g pro.





CUPCAKES

CUPCAKES HAVE A PLACE AT ALL HOLIDAY OCCASIONS—
SCHOOL PARTIES, OFFICE CELEBRATIONS, FAMILY SHINDIGS.
ALL IT TAKES IS SOME BRIGHT, COLORFUL FROSTING AND
SWEET CANDY COMBOS FOR FESTIVE FUN.



FIND IT

sunflower

kernels and

Candy-coated

holiday-theme

sprinkles are

available at

many hobby

stores.

SNOW GLOBE CUPCAKES

DECORATE 1 hour 30 minutes

- 3 cups Cream Cheese Frosting (p. 17) or canned cream cheese frosting
- Blue food coloring
- 12 Cookie Cupcakes or other desired-flavor 2½-inch cupcakes in paper bake cups
- Clear and/or blue coarse sugar (optional)
- Tiny marshmallows
- Red rolled fruit leather
- Black candy-coated chocolate pieces
- Black candy-coated sunflower kernels
- Nonpareils
- Orange gumdrops, cut into slivers
- Pine tree sprinkles
- Snowflake sprinkles
- 12 chocolate wafer cookies (optional)
- 1. Tint half of the Cream Cheese Frosting a light sky blue color using food coloring. Spread half of the top of each Cookie Cupcake with blue frosting, swirling slightly. Spread

the other half of each cupcake top with white frosting, swirling slightly. If desired, roll edges of cupcakes in coarse sugar.

- 2. For each snowman cupcake, press two tiny marshmallows together and flatten into a large disk. Flatten a single tiny marshmallow into a smaller disk. Position the smaller disk above the larger disk on a frosted cupcake to create a snowman.
- 3. For scarves, unroll red fruit leather and cut into strips. Decorate each snowman with a scarf. Press candy-coated chocolate pieces and sunflower kernels into frosting above small marshmallow disk for a hat. Attach nonpareils for eyes and a gumdrop sliver for a nose. Arrange pine tree and snowflake sprinkles around snowman for a winter scene.
- 4. If desired, to make cupcakes look like snow globes, place each cupcake on its side on a chocolate wafer cookie, letting a little of the cookie stick out in front. Secure cupcakes to cookies with white frosting. Makes 12 cupcakes.

PER CUPCAKE 563 cal., 26 g fat (11 g sat. fat), 72 mg chol., 352 mg sodium, 80 g carb., 1 g fiber, 5 g pro.

COOKIE CUPCAKES Preheat oven to 350°F. Line twenty-four 2½-inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. Cut one 16.5-ounce tube refrigerated peanut butter cookie dough into 24 pieces. Roll dough pieces into balls. In a large bowl combine one package 2-layer-size chocolate cake mix, 4 ounces softened cream cheese, 1 cup water, ½ cup vegetable oil, and 3 eggs. Beat with a mixer on medium according to package directions. Set aside about 1 cup of the batter. Spoon the remaining batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each about half full. Press a peanut butter cookie ball into batter in each cup. Top each with about 1 teaspoon of the remaining batter. Bake about 20 minutes or until tops spring back when lightly touched. Cool cupcakes in muffin cups on wire racks 5 minutes. Cool completely on wire racks. Makes 24 cupcakes.



SNOW GLOBE CUPCAKES WITH GINGERBREAD PEOPLE Frost

cupcakes as directed in Step 1. For each gingerbread person, microwave two or three vanilla caramels, unwrapped, 5 to 10 seconds or until softened. Press caramels together into a flat disk; use a 1-inch gingerbread person-shape cutter to cut out a gingerbread person. Pipe white frosting bands onto arms and legs; pipe hair, eyes, and mouth. Attach small red decorative candies for buttons. Press one or two gingerbread people onto each cupcake. If desired, make cupcakes look like snow globes as directed in Step 4.

SNOW GLOBE CUPCAKES WITH CHRISTMAS TREES Frost cupcakes as directed in Step 1. For Christmas trees, unroll green rolled fruit leather. Use small tree-shape cookie cutters to cut out trees. Press trees into green edible glitter. Press trees, glitter sides up, onto frosted cupcakes. Attach multicolor confetti sprinkles on trees using frosting. If desired, make cupcakes look like snow globes as directed in Step 4.

CHRISTMAS ORNAMENT CUPCAKES

Pictured on page 121.

DECORATE 1 hour 30 minutes

- 12 desired-flavor 2½-inch cupcakes in paper bake cups
- 1 cup Creamy White Frosting (p. 16) or canned creamy white frosting
- 12 oz. Easy Homemade Fondant (p. 18) or white rolled fondant icing*
- Desired colors paste food colorings*
- Powdered sugar
- Water or light-color corn syrup
- 12 1½-inch pieces black shoestring licorice
- 12 small white gumdrops
- Luster dust (optional)
- 1. Spread tops of cupcakes with a thin layer of Creamy White Frosting. Let stand until set.
- 2. Divide Easy Homemade Fondant into several portions. If desired, leave one portion of fondant white. (Keep fondant

covered with plastic wrap when not using.) Use a toothpick to add a small amount of desired food coloring to each of the remaining portions of fondant. Knead fondant until color is evenly distributed.** Add more food coloring as needed to reach desired shade.

3. On a flat surface lightly dusted with

- powdered sugar, roll out one portion of the fondant to $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch thickness. Using a 3-inch cookie cutter or a sharp knife, cut out circles to fit tops of cupcakes. Place fondant circles on tops of frosted cupcakes, gently molding them over the edges of cupcake tops and smoothing the edges of fondant. Repeat with other colors of fondant, cutting a total of 12 circles.
- 4. Reroll scraps to $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch thickness or thinner. Use a fluted pastry wheel or knife to cut strips; use a straw or pastry tip to cut dots or small circles from fondant scraps. Lightly moisten backs of strips and dots with water; attach strips and dots to fondant-covered cupcakes. To give cupcakes a three-dimensional effect, curve strips slightly.
- **5.** For ornament hangers, bend a licorice piece in half and insert ends into the top of a gumdrop; attach gumdrops to cupcakes with frosting. If desired, brush cupcakes with luster dust for shine.

Makes 12 cupcakes.

*TIP Instead of fondant icing, you can use rolled fruit leather in various colors.

**TIP If you like, wear plastic gloves to keep from discoloring your hands.

PER CUPCAKE 425 cal., 13 g fat (6 g sat. fat), 45 mg chol., 150 mg sodium, 74 g carb., 0 g fiber, 3 g pro.



NORTH POLE SNOWBALL CUPCAKE

Place Creamy White Frosting (page 16) in a pastry bag fitted with a medium star tip. To create long, tall stars, squeeze the pastry bag while slowly pulling up; sprinkle frosting with coarse white decorating sugar. If desired, write "North Pole" on a flag cut from thick white paper. Attach to a small candy cane with a dab of frosting. Insert the candy cane into the cupcake just far enough to hold it upright.



MELTY SNOWMAN CUPCAKE

Press a vanilla wafer cookie vertically into the top of a cupcake as far as it will go. Microwave canned vanilla frosting until it reaches a thick drizzling consistency, stirring every 5 seconds. Carefully spoon frosting over cupcake and wafer to coat, allowing some to drip down the sides, if desired. For hat, dip half of a mini chocolate sandwich cookie with white filling (such as a mini Oreo) into melted chocolate, letting excess drip off. Place on a sheet of waxed paper; immediately top chocolate-covered cookie with a miniature chocolate peanut butter cup. Let stand until firm. Add dots of melted chocolate to wafer head for eyes, and place an orange jimmy sprinkle on cupcake for nose. Place hat at side of head; if necessary, secure with frosting.



SANTA HAT CUPCAKE

Tint canned creamy white frosting with red paste or gel food coloring,* leaving some white for the hat rim. Place red-tinted frosting in a pastry bag fitted with a large round tip (if frosting is too soft to hold its shape, chill 30 minutes at a time until firm enough to work with). On the cupcake, pipe frosting in a spiral that gets smaller as it nears the top. Top the hat with a tiny marshmallow. Place remaining white frosting in a pastry bag fitted with a small to medium star tip. Pipe small stars around the rim of the cupcake to create the hat band.

*REALLY RED

Getting a truly red color for frosting requires a lot of the flavor of the use red-red paste food coloring or gel (available at hobby stores) and keep adding it until you get the desired color. You can also use no-taste red paste food coloring, but the color won't be true red.

CHRISTMAS TREE CUPCAKE

Frost a cupcake with canned vanilla frosting. Microwave white candy coating or almond bark ½ minutes or until melted, stirring every 30 seconds. Holding a sugar ice cream cone upside down over a bowl, spoon or spread melted candy coating around the outside of the cone. Holding the cone over a plate, sprinkle liberally with white nonpareils, jimmies, decorating sugar, or shredded coconut. Place cone, point side up, on waxed paper to set up. Place cone on tupcake.



GRAVEYARD CUPCAKES

DECORATE 1 hour 15 minutes

- 12 chocolate sandwich cookies with white filling
- 1½ cups Creamy White Frosting (p. 16) or canned creamy white frosting
- ¹/₃ cup chocolate-flavor candy coating disks
- 12 desired-flavor 2½-inch cupcakes in paper bake cups
- Candy pumpkins (optional)
- Green food coloring (optional)
- 1. Split cookies in half. Remove and discard filling. Using a serrated knife, carefully cut three sides from 12 of the cookie halves to make tombstone shapes. Crush the remaining cookies and trimmings. Place about ½ cup of the Creamy White Frosting in a heavy resealable plastic bag; seal. Snip off a small piece from one corner. On the flat sides of tombstones, pipe RIP, BOO!, or other messages.
- 2. Place a sheet of waxed paper on a large baking sheet. Microwave candy coating $1\frac{1}{2}$ minutes or until melted, stirring every 30 seconds. Place in a heavy resealable plastic bag; seal. Snip

off a small piece from one corner. On the prepared baking sheet pipe 12 small leafless trees, each 3 to 4 inches tall (make them thick so they won't break when hardened). If desired, make extra trees in case one or two break. Chill in the refrigerator until candy coating hardens. 3. Meanwhile, generously spread tops of cupcakes with frosting. Carefully insert a cookie tombstone into frosting on each cupcake. Use a toothpick to make a small hole in each cupcake top. Carefully peel trees from waxed paper and insert into holes on cupcake tops; if necessary, use frosting to secure trees. If desired, place a candy pumpkin on top of some of the cupcakes.

4. Sprinkle cupcakes with the crushed cookies. If desired, tint about ½ cup of the frosting using green food coloring. Place in a heavy resealable plastic bag; seal. Snip off a small piece from one corner. Using quick upward motions, pipe grass accents on either side of the tombstones, around trees, and on pumpkins. Serve immediately or store at room temperature 1 to 2 hours. Makes 12 cupcakes.

PER CUPCAKE 354 cal., 16 g fat (5 g sat. fat), 1 mg chol., 249 mg sodium, 52 g carb., 0 g fiber, 3 g pro.

HOW TO MAKE IT



Place cookies in a resealable plastic bag. Roll with a rolling pin until fine crumbs form.



Fill a resealable plastic bag with candy coating. Snip a tiny corner off bag; pipe trees onto waxed paper.



After trees have hardened in the refrigerator, carefully remove them from the paper.



Gently press tree trunks into frosting.



SPIDER CUPCAKESFrost mini (1%-inch) cupcakes with Chocolate Butter Frosting (page 17) or canned chocolate frosting. For legs, press short lengths of black shoestring licorice into frosting on each side of cupcakes. Top each cupcake with a chocolate-covered marshmallow-andgraham-cracker cookie (such as Mallomars). Cut tiny marshmallows in half; attach to cookies for eyes using frosting. Top each marshmallow half with a dot of chocolate frosting. Press a black sugar pearl sprinkle into frosting for pupil.



CANDY CORN CUPCAKE

Divide Creamy White Frosting (page 16) or canned white frosting into three portions. Tint one portion orange and one portion yellow, and leave the remaining portion white. Spoon each color frosting into a separate pastry bag fitted with a large round tip. Pipe a swirl of each color onto a cupcake, stacking colors like candy corn. If desired, top with a candy corn.



MONSTER CAKES
Tint Creamy White Frosting (page 16) or canned white frosting blue, purple, and/or other desired colors. Spoon tinted frostings into separate pastry bags fitted with a medium star tip. Pipe frosting into short spikes on cupcakes as desired. Add candy eyes (available at hobby stores).

GHOST CUPCAKE
Spoon Sweetened Whipped Cream Frosting (page 16)
into a pastry bag fitted with a large round tip. Pipe
one large pointed mound onto a cupcake to make a ghost shape. Pipe face using a tube of purchased black frosting fitted with a small round tip. Serve immediately or cover with a cake dome (or large bowl) and refrigerate up to 8 hours.



LOVE NOTE CUPCAKES

PREP 50 minutes
BAKE per package directions
DECORATE 45 minutes

- 1 pkg. 2-layer-size German chocolate cake mix
- 1 2-oz. bottle red food coloring (1/4 cup)
- 1 recipe White Chocolate Whipped Cream
- 1 recipe Mascarpone Frosting
- 2 cups Chocolate Butter Frosting (p. 17) or canned chocolate frosting
- Line twenty-four 2½-inch muffin cups with paper bake cups; set aside.
 Pour red food coloring into a measuring cup. Add enough water to equal the amount of liquid called for in package directions. Prepare cake mix according to package directions, using the food coloring and water for the

liquid. Fill muffin cups; bake as directed for cupcakes. Cool cupcakes in pans 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pans; cool on wire racks.

- 3. Spoon White Chocolate Whipped Cream into a pastry bag fitted with a large round tip. Insert tip into the top of each cupcake. Squeeze some of the whipped cream into the center of each cupcake.
- 4. Frost cupcakes with some of the white Mascarpone Frosting, pink Mascarpone Frosting, and Chocolate Butter Frosting. Place the remaining frostings in separate pastry bags fitted with small round tips or small star tips. Pipe messages or draw hearts onto cupcakes. Store loosely covered in the refrigerator. Makes 24 cupcakes. WHITE CHOCOLATE WHIPPED

CREAM In a small saucepan cook and stir 3 ounces chopped white baking chocolate with cocoa butter and ½ cup heavy cream over low

heat until chocolate is nearly melted. Remove from heat; stir until smooth. Cool 15 minutes. In a chilled large bowl beat $\frac{3}{4}$ cup heavy cream with a mixer on medium until soft peaks form (tips curl). Add cooled white chocolate mixture. Beat on medium just until stiff peaks form (tips stand straight). If desired, cover and chill up to 24 hours before using.

MASCARPONE FROSTING In a large bowl combine ${}^{1}\!\!/_{2}$ cup softened mascarpone cheese or cream cheese and 2 tablespoons softened butter. Beat with a mixer on medium until smooth. Beat in ${}^{1}\!\!/_{2}$ teaspoon vanilla. Gradually beat in 4 cups powdered sugar. Beat in 2 to 4 teaspoons milk, 1 teaspoon at a time, to make frosting spreading consistency. (If desired, use red food coloring to tint desired amount of frosting pink). PER CUPCAKE 374 cal., 16 g fat (8 g sat. fat), 57 mg chol., 181 mg sodium, 56 g carb., 1 g fiber, 3 g pro.







ON THE ROAD

Elaborately decorated cupcakes don't travel as well as those with simple decorations. If you do take them on the road, carry them in a cupcake tote to avoid movement and tipping (there are also disposable cupcake holders available at hobby stores). Pack extra icing and candies to fix any decorations that fall off.



BIRD'S NEST CUPCAKES

PREP 45 minutes BAKE 15 minutes at 350°F DECORATE 45 minutes

- 23/4 cups cake flour
 - 2 tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1 8-oz. carton sour cream
- 1/3 cup orange juice
- Tbsp. lemon zest
- 2 Tbsp. lemon juice
- 1 cup butter, softened
- 11/4 cups sugar
 - 4 eggs, room temperature
 - 1 recipe Citrus Frosting
 - 6 oz. vanilla candy coating
 - 4 cups chow mein noodles
- $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{2}{3}$ cup (about 84) pastel candy-coated egg-shape chocolates or jelly beans

- 1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line twentyeight 2½-inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. In a medium bowl stir together the first four ingredients (through salt). In a small bowl combine the next four ingredients (though lemon juice).
- 2. In an extra-large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Gradually add sugar, 1/4 cup at a time, beating on medium until combined. Scrape bowl; beat 2 minutes more. Add eggs, one at a time, beating after each. Add flour mixture and sour cream mixture alternately, beating on low after each until well combined.
- 3. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each about three-fourths full.
- 4. Bake 15 to 17 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool cupcakes in pans 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pans; cool on wire racks.

5. Frost cupcakes with Citrus Frosting. Microwave candy coating 11/2 minutes or until melted, stirring every 30 seconds. In a large bowl combine chow mein noodles and melted candy coating. Shape chow mein noodle mixture into a nest on top of each cupcake.* Add candy-coated egg-shape chocolates to each nest. Makes 28 cupcakes.

CITRUS FROSTING In a medium bowl stir together one 16-ounce can cream cheese frosting or vanilla frosting and ½ teaspoon finely shredded lemon peel.

*TIP If the chow mein noodle mixture begins to set up before you're done, heat it in the microwave 10 seconds at a time until softened.

PER CUPCAKE 303 cal., 14 g fat (8 g sat. fat), 52 mg chol., 194 mg sodium, 41 g carb., 0 g fiber, 3 g pro.

BURROWING BUNNIES

DECORATE 1 hour

- 1 recipe Creamy White Frosting (p. 16)
- Green and pink food colorings
- 1 recipe Decorating Icing (p. 61)
- 12 desired-flavor 2½-inch cupcakes in paper bake cups
- Tiny pastel jelly beans
- Pastel licorice twists, pulled apart
- Large and tiny marshmallows
- Shredded coconut
- Small round white candies (such as Sixlets)

- 1. Remove about ½ cup Creamy White Frosting; set aside. Tint the remaining frosting green. Tint Powdered Sugar Icing pink.
- 2. Spoon green frosting into a pastry bag fitted with a multi-opening tip (info, page 20). Spoon pink frosting into a pastry bag fitted with a very small round tip. Pipe green frosting in short bursts onto cupcakes to look like grass. For Easter baskets, sprinkle top centers of six cupcakes with jelly beans. Insert a toothpick into each side of cupcakes to make holes. Cut licorice twist segments into handle-size pieces. Insert the ends of licorice pieces into holes in cupcakes to make handles.
- 3. For bunny cupcakes, cut three large marshmallows in half to make six halves. Spread outside of each marshmallow half with white frosting; roll in coconut. Place one marshmallow half, cut side down, on each of the remaining six cupcakes. Attach a small round white candy to top of each marshmallow for tail using frosting. 4. Use your fingers to press and shape 12 tiny marshmallows into oval bunny feet. Pipe pink icing onto tiny marshmallows to make foot pads. Attach to large marshmallow using white frosting. Place a small pile of jelly beans in the frosting grass near the bunny. Makes 12 cupcakes. PER CUPCAKE 434 cal., 18 g fat (5 g sat.

PER CUPCAKE 434 cal., 18 g fat (5 g sat. fat), 50 mg chol., 175 mg sodium, 67 g carb., 0 g fiber, 2 g pro.





BERRY SHORTCAKES

PREP 40 minutes COOL 30 minutes

- 1 cup fresh strawberries, cut up; blueberries; and/or raspberries
- 1/4 cup water
- ½ cup sugar
- 12 Yellow Cupcakes (p. 14)
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1/4 cup sour cream
- 2 Tbsp. sugar or honey
- $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups fresh strawberries, halved; blueberries; and/or raspberries
- 1. In a small saucepan bring the 1 cup berries and the water to boiling; reduce heat. Simmer, covered, 5 minutes. Press mixture through a fine-mesh sieve; discard any solids. Return juice to saucepan. Stir in the $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar. Bring mixture to boiling, stirring to dissolve

- sugar. Boil gently, uncovered, 2 minutes. Transfer to a bowl; cool about 30 minutes.
- 2. Using a fork, poke holes in tops of Yellow Cupcakes. Slowly spoon juice mixture over cupcakes.
- 3. In a medium bowl beat heavy cream, sour cream, and the 2 tablespoons sugar with a mixer on medium until soft peaks form (tips curl). If desired, place cream mixture in a pastry bag fitted with a large star tip. Generously spoon or pipe mixture onto tops of cupcakes. Serve immediately or chill in the refrigerator up to 4 hours.
- 4. To serve, top cupcakes with the 2½ cups berries. Makes 12 cupcakes. PER CUPCAKE 316 cal., 16 g fat (10 g sat. fat), 73 mg chol., 142 mg sodium, 41 g carb., 1 g fiber, 4 g pro.





SPARKLER CUPCAKES

DECORATE 50 minutes STAND 1 hour

- 1/2 cup red candy coating disks
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup blue candy coating disks
- 1/2 cup white candy coating disks
- $2^{1}/_{2}$ cups Creamy White Frosting (p. 16) or canned creamy white frosting
- 12 Confetti Cupcakes or other desired-flavor $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch cupcakes in paper bake cups
- Red, white, and blue sprinkles and/or jimmies (optional)
- 1. Microwave red candy coating $1\frac{1}{2}$ minutes or until melted, stirring every 30 seconds. Transfer melted candy coating to a small heavy resealable plastic bag. Snip off a small piece from one corner of bag. On waxed paper, make 8- to 9-inch-long sticks (about $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch thickness) by piping back and forth onto waxed paper in a zigzag pattern. Let stand about 1 hour or until firm. (If necessary, place the sticks of candy coating in the freezer until firm.) Repeat with blue and white candy coating.
- **2.** Meanwhile, place Creamy White Frosting in a pastry bag fitted with a medium star tip. Pipe frosting onto tops of Confetti Cupcakes.
- **3.** Break the zigzag sticks of candy coating into 3- to 4-inch lengths. Insert the candy sticks into frosting, radiating out from the center like a sparkler. If desired, sprinkle with colored sprinkles. Makes 12 cupcakes. **CONFETTI CUPCAKES** Preheat oven to 350°F. Line twenty-four to twenty-six 2½-inch muffin cups with paper bake cups. In a large bowl combine one package 2-layer-size white cake mix, one package 4-servingsize instant cheesecake-flavor pudding and pie filling mix, 1 cup water, 3 eggs, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sour cream, and $\frac{1}{3}$ cup vegetable oil. Beat with a mixer on low until combined. Beat on medium 2 minutes more, scraping sides of bowl occasionally. Stir in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup red, white, and blue sprinkles or jimmies. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups, filling each two-thirds to three-fourths full. Bake 20 to 22 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool cupcakes in pans 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pans; cool on wire racks. Makes 24 cupcakes.

PER CUPCAKE 493 cal., 25 g fat (8 g sat. fat), 32 mg chol., 230 mg sodium, 64 g carb., 0 g fiber, 3 g pro.

HOW TO MAKE IT



Place a resealable bag in a large cup, folding bag edges over sides of cup. Pour in melted candy coating.



Cut a small hole from corner of bag; pipe zigzag patterns onto waxed paper.



Once zigzag sticks of candy coating are hardened (place in the freezer if necessary), gently peel sticks from paper.

recipes

BASIC CUPCAKES

- Chocolate Cupcakes
- Citrus Yellow Cupcakes
- Vanilla Cupcakes
- Yellow Cupcakes

BEVERAGES

- 107 After-Dinner Almond Coffee
- 104 Caramel-Nut Frappé
- 105 Chocolate-Peppermint Sipping Chocolate
- Cupcake Shakes
- 102 Irish Cream Float
- 101 Raspberry Sipper

BRIDAL & BABY SHOWER CUPCAKES

- ABC Block Cupcakes
- Baby Bib Cupcakes
- Baby Chicks
- Baby Surprise! Cupcakes
- Black and White Bows 60
- Butter Cakes with Sour Cream Frosting
- Cookie-in-the-Middle Baby Cakes 60
- Lemon-Poppy Seed Cupcakes 64
- 61 Marbled Chocolate Cupcakes
- Strawberry Cupcakes
- Triple-Chocolate Cupcakes
- Wedding Cupcake Bouquet

BUTTER CUPCAKES

- 110 Butterfinger Cupcakes
- Churro Cupcakes
- Cinnamon Roll Cupcakes
- Cream Soda-Toffee Cupcakes
- 104 Hazelnut Crème Brûlée Cupcakes
- Lemon Drop Cupcakes
- 90 Louisiana Praline Cupcakes
- Root Beer Float Cupcakes
- 110 Snickers Cupcakes

CAKE MIX CUPCAKES

- Apple Cupcakes
- Confetti Cupcakes
- Cookie Cupcakes
- Hot Fudge Sundae Cupcakes
- Neapolitan Cupcake Cones
- Orange Cream Pop Cupcakes
- Peaches and Cream Cupcakes
- S'More Cupcakes

CHOCOLATE CUPCAKES

- Black Forest Cupcakes
- Chocolate Cupcakes
- 106 Grasshopper Cupcakes
- Heath Bar Cupcakes
- Mochaccino Cupcakes
- Mounds Bar Cupcakes
- Red Velvet Cupcakes

- Boston Cream Pies
- Cannoli Cupcakes
- Chocolate-Orange Cupcakes
- Cream-Filled Fudgy Cupcakes
- Creme-Filled Chocolate Cupcakes
- Creme-Filled Sponge Cakes
- Jelly-Filled Doughnut Cupcakes 79
- Mocha-Filled Banana Cupcakes

- 39 Peanut Butter Cupcakes
- 39 Piña Colada Cakes
- Pineapple-Carrot Cupcakes
- Salted Caramel-Chocolate Cupcakes 41
- Tiny Chocolate-Cherry Bombs

FILLINGS & TOPPINGS

- Bananas Foster Topping
- Candied Flowers
- 104 Caramelized Sugar Drizzle
- Creme Filling
- Easy Homemade Fondant
- Glazed Lemon Slices
- Salted Caramel 41
- Streusel Topping
- Sweetened Whipped Cream
- Tart Cherry Filling
- 130 White Chocolate Whipped Cream

FROSTINGS & ICINGS

- Banana Butter Frosting
- Bourbon-Cream Cheese Frosting 94
- Browned-Butter Frosting
- Butter Frosting and flavor variations
- **Buttery Orange Frosting**
- 110 Caramel Frosting
- 96 Chai Cream Cheese Frosting
- Cherry-Almond Butter Frosting
- **Chocolate Frosting**
- Chocolate Glaze
- Cinnamon Cream Frosting
- Citrus Frosting
- Classic Buttercream and chocolate
- Cocoa Butter Frosting
- **Coconut Frosting**
- Coffee Butter Frosting 94
- Cream Cheese Frosting and cocoa variation
- 81 Cream Cheese-Raspberry Frosting
- Cream Pop Frostings
- Creamy Peach Frosting
- 103 Creamy Raspberry Frosting
- Creamy White Frosting
- Decorating Icing
- 61 Dark Chocolate Frosting Float Frosting
- Fluffy Frosting
- 41 **Fudge Frosting** 18 Ganache
- 106 Grasshopper Frosting
- Irish Cream Ganache and Icing
- 117 Lemon Frosting
- 64 Lemon Glaze
- 106 Marbled Almond Frosting
- 92 Marshmallow Frosting
- 130 Mascarpone Frosting Meringue Frosting
- Pastel Frosting
- Peanut Butter Frosting 110
- Praline Cream
- Ricotta Frosting 68 Shiny Chocolate Glaze
- Sour Cream Frosting
- Sweetened Whipped Cream Frosting
- Toffee Frosting

- 104 Vanilla-Hazelnut Buttercream
- 80 Vanilla Icing
- Whipped Sour Cream Frosting
- White Chocolate Frosting
- White Chocolate Ganache Frosting
- White Icing

FRUIT & VEGETABLE CUPCAKES

- Banana Split Cupcakes
- Blueberry Muffin Cupcakes
- Candied Bacon-Sweet Potato Cupcakes
- Cherry-Almond Vanilla Cupcakes
- Cranberry-Chai Cupcakes
- Island Bananas Foster Cupcakes 98
- Spiked Raspberry-Lemonade

Cupcakes

- HOLIDAY CUPCAKES 134 Berry Shortcakes
- 132 Bird's Nest Cupcakes
- 133 Burrowing Bunnies
- Candy Corn Cupcake
- **Christmas Ornament Cupcakes**
- Christmas Tree Cupcake
- Ghost Cupcake 129
- Graveyard Cupcakes
- Love Note Cupcakes
- 124 Melty Snowman Cupcake 129 Monster Cakes
- 124 North Pole Snowball Cupcake
- 126 Pumpkin Patch Cupcakes
- Santa Hat Cupcake
- Shamrock Milk Shake Cupcakes Snow Globe Cupcakes
- 135 Sparkler Cupcakes

128 Spider Cupcakes

- KIDS' CUPCAKES
- **Beach Party Cupcakes**
- **Butterfly Garden** Color Wheel Cupcakes 84
- Confetti Cupcakes 49
- End of the Rainbow
- Flower Power Kitty Cakes 46
- 48 Lions, Tigers, and Bears Cupcakes
- 44 Owl Tree Cupcakes
- 44 Pick-a-Sport Cupcakes Sea Turtle Cupcakes

Yarn Cupcakes

- MARBLED CUPCAKES Black-and-White Irish Cream
- Cupcakes
- 106 Marbled Almond Cupcakes 115 Peanut Butter-Chocolate Twist

SPECIAL DIET RECIPES

- Homemade Gluten-Free Flour Mix
- Special Chocolate Cupcakes Special Vanilla Cupcakes
- Surprise! Meringue Frosting



Cupcakes is published once a year in March by Meredith Corp., 1716 Locust St., Des Moines, IA 50309-3023. In Canada: Maled under Publications Mail Sales Product Agreement No. 40069223. Canadian BN 12348 2887 RT. trademark in the United States, Canada, and Australia. Better Homes and Gardens marca registrada en México. ® Meredith Corp. 2016. All rights reserved. Printed in the U.S.A. setter Homes and Gardens is a registered trademark in the United States, Cupcakes™ (ISSN 2159-6204), Spring 2016.

Better Homes gardenstore

every plant 100% guaranteed

ORDER TODAY:

Call White Flower Farm

1-800-420-2852

REFER TO CODE SIPO3

ORDER ONLINE: BHGGardenStore.com

Welcome Spring TO YOUR GARDEN

A PINK LILAC THAT REBLOOMS!

If you've always wanted the intoxicating scent of Lilacs in your garden but didn't have room for them, take a close look at this new addition to the Bloomerang® family of reblooming Lilacs. Its upright, bushy form reaches just 4–5' tall, and its dainty spikes of reddish purple buds open to intensely fragrant, soft pink flowers. 'Pink Perfume' blooms heavily in May and, after a short rest, flowers again intermittently until fall.

Ships in a 1 gallon pot in spring 2016 at the proper planting time for your hardiness zone. Recommended for zones 4–7S/8W. **Item MM067629**, \$29.95 each plus shipping.

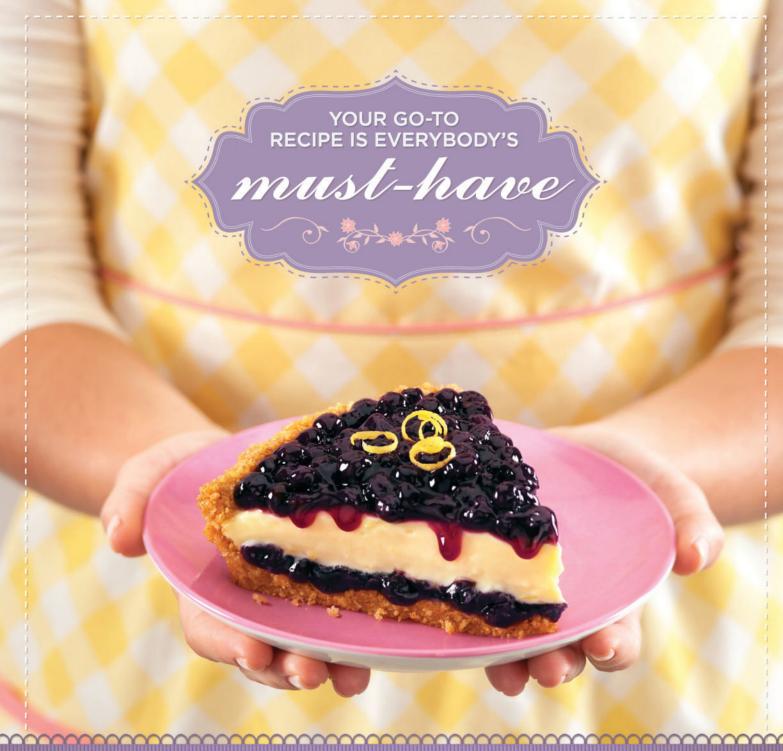




BUTTERFLY BANQUET ANNUAL COLLECTION

Welcome butterflies to your yard and enjoy colorful blooms all summer long with this delightful combination of butterfly magnets for a sunny location. Butterflies and other pollinators will love the violet-blue spires of Agastache 'Blue Boa' from summer to frost. Coleus 'Dipt in Wine' adds a layer of colorful contrast while the blossoms of Lantana Landmark™ Citrus, Calibrachoa Can-Can® Peach, and Verbena Superbena® Lilac Blue give this pollinator feast a festive flair.

We ship 1 of each plant, 5 plants total, in 1 pint pots in spring 2016 at the proper planting time for your hardiness zone. **Item MM087238**, **\$39 each plus shipping**.



LEMONY BLUEBERRY LAYERED PIE

Prep: 20 min | Chill: 1 hr | Servings: 8

- 1 graham cracker crust for a 9 in. pie
- 1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened
- 1 (14 oz.) can sweetened condensed milk
- 1/4 cup powdered sugar
- 1 (3.4 oz.) box instant lemon pudding mix
- 2 tsp. fresh lemon zest
- 1/4 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 1 (21 oz.) can Lucky Leaf® Premium Blueberry Fruit Filling & Topping

Combine cream cheese, condensed milk and powdered sugar in a large bowl. Using an electric mixer, mix at medium speed for 1-2 minutes, until smooth.

Add pudding mix, lemon zest and lemon juice; mix until well blended. Spoon about half of Lucky Leaf® Premium Blueberry Fruit Filling & Topping evenly into bottom of graham cracker crust. Spoon lemon-filling mixture on top and spread evenly. Cover and chill for at least 1 hour. Spoon remaining Lucky Leaf® Premium Blueberry Fruit Filling & Topping on top just before serving. Garnish with fresh lemon zest if desired.

For more recipes, visit LUCKY LFAF GOM



