

## HEAVENLY VANILLA CUPCAKES WITH TWO FROSTINGS

*Prepared in 25 minutes or less.*

*For the cupcake:*

- 2¼ cups flour, sifted
- ½ Tbs baking powder
- 2 cups sugar
- ¾ tsp salt
- 1 cup plus 1 Tbs unsalted butter
- 4 large eggs

*For the Vanilla Frosting:*

- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 8 cups Confectioners' sugar
- ½ cup whole milk
- 1 tsp Madagascar Vanilla extract, from the Bourbon-Madagascar vanilla bean

*For the Chocolate Buttercream Frosting:*

- 10 oz bittersweet chocolate, chopped
- 8 oz semisweet chocolate, chopped
- 1 lbs unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- Pinch of cream of tartar
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ cup egg whites, (3 extra-large eggs), room temperature
- 2 tsp Madagascar vanilla extract
- 2 tsp instant espresso powder dissolved in 1 tsp hot water
- 2 Tbs Kahlua or dark rum, option
- \* Optional Dark Chocolate Glaze and Cream Cheese Frosting

Preheat oven to 325°F.

In a large muffin pan, line each with paper cupcake liners. Spray tops with cooking spray. Sift flour, sugar, baking powder and salt together into a large bowl. With a mixer, add softened butter and eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Gradually, add milk and 1 teaspoon vanilla, beating constantly. Scoop with an ice cream scooper into lined muffin pan. Bake for 18 – 20 minutes. Let cool completely.

*For the Vanilla Frosting:*



In a chilled bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the “paddle” attachment, cream the softened butter until smooth and creamy, approximately 3 minutes.

With the mixer on low speed, add 6 cups of Confectioners’ sugar, milk and vanilla extract. Mix until light and fluffy. If necessary, gradually add remaining 2 cups of Confectioners’ sugar to reach the desired frosting consistency. Makes frosting for at least 30 cupcakes.

*For the Chocolate Buttercream Frosting:*

Melt the chopped chocolate in a metal or glass bowl set over simmering water until smooth. Allow to cool. Mix with an electric mixer fitted with a whisk in a large bowl the egg whites, sugar, cream of tartar and salt until combined. Heat the egg mixture inside the bowl over simmering water until they are slightly warm to the touch, approximately 5 minutes. Remove bowl from simmering water and whisk egg mixture on high speed for an additional 5 minutes until the meringue is cool and forms stiff peaks.

Add the butter, a tablespoon at a time while continuously beating on medium speed. Scrape down the sides of the bowl with a rubber spatula. Add the melted chocolate, vanilla, espresso and Kahlua. Mix for 1 minute or until the chocolate is well-blended into the meringue. Cool buttercream frosting then beat it one more time before spreading atop cupcakes.

*Optional: Dark Chocolate Glaze (Perfect for choc-a-holics!)*

6 oz fine quality bittersweet chocolate

2 Tbs unsalted butter

½ cup heavy cream

1½ Tbs instant espresso powder dissolved in 1 Tbs boiling water

In a metal bowl set over a pan of barely simmering water melt the chocolate with the butter, the cream, and the espresso mixture, stirring until the glaze is smooth, remove the bowl from the heat, and let the glaze cool to room temperature. Spread the glaze carefully over the cooled cupcakes.

*\* Bonus Recipe Cream Cheese Frosting:*

➡ 8 oz cream cheese, softened to room temperature

➡ ¾ stick (6 Tbs) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature

➡ 1½ cups confectioners’ sugar

➡ 1 tsp vanilla extract

➡ 1 tsp ground cinnamon

In a mixing bowl on medium speed, cream the cream cheese and butter together until well blended. Slowly sift in the ground cinnamon and Confectioners’ sugar until fully incorporated. Stir in the vanilla extract. Frost cupcakes. (For Halloween, add green food coloring) or (For Valentine’s Day add red food coloring to the frosting).