

INCREDIBLE CUPCAKES & FROSTING

Okay. Everyone loves great cupcakes. The cupcakes from this recipe showed up at a birthday party a few years back. After some digging, I got my hands on it. The strawberry frosting is unbeatable! Here goes:

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, softened (Use Irish or European Unsalted if you can get it! The cake comes out smoother this way!)
- 2 cups sugar
- 4 large eggs, room temperature
- 1 ½ cups self-rising flour
- 1 ¼ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line 2 12-cup muffin tins with paper liners.

In a large bowl, on the speed of an electric mixer, cream the butter until smooth. Add the sugar gradually and beat until fluffy, about 3 minutes. Add the eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Combine the flours (Do this through a sifter to avoid lumps) and add in 4 parts, alternating with the milk and vanilla, beating well after each addition. Using an ice-cream scoop, fill each cup to about halfway full. Bake for 20-25 minutes (At 22 / 23 minutes, you should be able to smell 'em!) or until a toothpick comes out clean. Let the cakes cool for about 10 minutes. Remove from the pans and cool on a wire rack (Cool completely before frosting, or the icing will melt!)

Buttercream Frosting

- INGREDIENTS:**
- 4 ½ - 5 cups confectioners (powdered) sugar (I use 4 ½, but have sometimes needed 5.)
- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, very soft (Use Irish or European butter if you can get it!)
- ½ cup of milk
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract

Cream the butter in a large mixing bowl on medium speed (This icing comes out a little better using a hand mixer!) Gradually add the sugar, milk and vanilla extract. Slowly increase the speed and beat until the icing is thick enough to be of good spreading consistency (Do not overbeat!!). You can add a few drops of food coloring, just make sure to mix thoroughly to blend.

FOR LEMON: Use above recipe but use 5 to 5 ½ cups of the confectioner's sugar. Add ¼ cup lemon juice (fresh, course!) & 1 teaspoon of grated lemon zest. Throw in a few drops of food coloring to turn the icing pale yellow.

STRAWBERRY: Use the original recipe & add chop / fold in several strawberries. Like the lemon frosting, add a few drops of red food coloring to turn the icing pink.