

Snickerdoodle Cupcakes

from Annie's Eats (cupcakes, frosting, cookies)

For the cupcakes:

1½ cups all-purpose flour
1½ cups cake flour, sifted
1 tbsp. baking powder
1 tsp. salt
1 tbsp. ground cinnamon
2 sticks (1 cup) unsalted butter, at room temperature
1¾ cups sugar
4 large eggs
2 tsp. vanilla extract
1¼ cups milk

For the frosting:

20 tbsp. (2 ½ sticks) unsalted butter, softened 2 ½ cups confectioners' sugar, sifted 1/8 tsp. salt 2 tsp. vanilla extract 2 tbsp. heavy cream

For garnish:

1 tsp. ground cinnamon (optional)
2 tbsp. sugar (optional)
Mini snickerdoodles (1/2 of recipe below)

To make the cupcakes, preheat the oven to 350° F. Line cupcake pans with paper liners. Combine the flours, baking powder, salt and cinnamon in a medium bowl; whisk to combine. In the bowl of an electric mixer, beat the butter and sugar on medium-high speed until light and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Beat in the eggs one at a time, mixing well after each addition. Blend in the vanilla. With the mixer on low speed, add in the dry ingredients in three additions alternating with the milk, beginning and ending with the dry ingredients. Beat each addition just until incorporated.

Divide the batter evenly between the prepared cupcake liners, filling each three-quarters full. Bake, rotating the pans halfway through, until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, about 18-20 minutes (8-10 minutes for minis). Allow to cool in the pans about 5 minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.

To make the frosting, in a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat butter at medium-high speed until smooth, about 20 seconds. Add confectioners' sugar and salt; beat at medium-low speed until most of the sugar is moistened, about 45 seconds. Scrape down the bowl and beat at medium speed until mixture is fully combined, about 15 seconds. Scrape bowl, add vanilla and heavy cream, and beat at medium speed until incorporated, about 10 seconds. Then increase the speed to medium-high and beat until light and fluffy, about 4 minutes, scraping down bowl once or twice.

Frost the cooled cupcakes as desired. In a small bowl, whisk together the ground cinnamon and sugar. Sprinkle a pinch of the cinnamon-sugar on top of each frosted cupcake. Garnish with mini snickerdoodles.

(Servings: 60 ish Minis, Prep time: 30 min., Cook time: 1 hr., Difficulty: Easy)

Mini Snickerdoodles

2 1/4 cups (11 1/4 oz.) unbleached all-purpose flour
2 tsp. cream of tartar
1 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. salt
12 tbsp. unsalted butter, softened but still cool
1/4 cup vegetable shortening
1 1/2 cups (10 1/2 oz.) granulated sugar, plus 3 tbsp. for rolling dough
2 large eggs
1 tbsp. ground cinnamon, for rolling dough

Adjust oven racks to upper- and lower-middle positions. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. Line baking sheets with parchment paper. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, cream of tartar, baking soda and salt; set aside. In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream the butter, shortening and 1 1/2 cups sugar on medium speed until well combined, 1 to 1 1/2 minutes.

Scrape down the sides of the bowl, add the eggs, and beat again until combined, about 30 seconds. Add in the dry ingredients and beat at low speed until just combined, about 20 seconds.

In a small, shallow bowl, combine the 3 tablespoons sugar and the cinnamon for rolling the dough. Stir or shake well to combine. Working with a little dough each time, roll the dough into 1/2-inch to 3/4-inch balls. Roll the balls in the cinnamon sugar mixture and place them on the prepared baking sheets, about 2 inches apart. Use a drinking glass with a flat bottom to gently flatten the dough balls (butter the bottom of the glass before starting, and dip it in sugar between cookies if it begins to stick).

Bake until the edges of the cookies are beginning to set and the center are soft and puffy, 8-10 minutes, rotating the baking sheets front to back and top to bottom halfway through the baking time. Let the cookies cool on the baking sheets 2-3 minutes before transferring them to a wire rack to cool completely.

(Servings: 120, Prep time: 30 min., Cook time: 1 hr., Difficulty: Easy)