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Golden Cupcakes

Cupcakes can be a little dry—since they're so small, they're often overbaked. But sometimes the problem lies with the recipe itself, which doesn't produce a particularly moist cake. This recipe solves that problem completely—the baked cake is dense and moist, the perfect combination for a successful cupcake. Here I've used a typical cupcake icing – butter and confectioners' sugar beaten together with just enough liquid to help dissolve the sugar, so the icing isn't grainy textured.

Makes 18 cupcakes.

Golden Cake Batter

2-3/4 cups all-purpose flour
(spoon flour into a dry-measure cup and level off)
2-1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
12 tablespoons (1-1/2 sticks) unsalted butter, softened
1-1/2 cups sugar
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest
6 large egg yolks
1 (8-ounce)/225 gram) container sour cream

Confectioners' Sugar Icing

8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened
4 cups confectioners' sugar, sifted after measuring
5 tablespoons milk or orange juice
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Two 12-cavity muffin pans with paper liners



Golden Cupcakes, continued

1. Set a rack in the middle of the oven and preheat to 350° F (180° C).
2. Combine the flour, baking powder, and salt and stir well to mix.
3. In the bowl of an electric mixer, combine the butter, sugar, vanilla, and lemon zest. Beat with the paddle on medium speed until lightened in color and texture, 3 to 4 minutes. Beat in the yolks, one at a time, beating well after each addition.
4. Decrease the mixer speed to lowest and add about half of the flour mixture. Stop and scrape down the bowl and paddle.
5. Beat in the sour cream, and after it is incorporated, beat in the remaining flour mixture. Stop and scrape the bowl and beater. Increase the speed to medium and beat the batter continuously for 3 minutes.
6. Divide the batter equally among the cavities in the pans, spooning it in. Bake the cupcakes until they are well risen and deep golden and feel firm when pressed in the center with a fingertip, about 20 minutes.
7. Cool in the pans on racks for 5 minutes, then unmold, turn right side up again, and cool completely on racks.
8. For the frosting, combine the butter and 1/2 cup of the confectioners' sugar in the bowl of an electric mixer. Beat with the paddle on low speed until smooth. Continue adding more confectioners' sugar, 1/2 cup at a time, until it is absorbed—the mixture will be dry at the end. Add the milk 1 tablespoon at a time, waiting until it is incorporated before adding more. Beat in the vanilla. Increase the mixer speed to medium and beat the icing for 5 minutes to make it light.
9. Use a small offset spatula to spread some of the icing on each cupcake. See *Decorating Cakes & Cupcakes*, page 267, for some ideas if you want to finish the cupcakes further.

Serving: These need no accompaniment.

Storage: For advance preparation, wrap and freeze the cupcakes for up to a month. Keep iced cupcakes at room temperature—the paper cases and icing keep their surface from becoming dry, but they are best on the day they are baked.