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Chocolate Mocha Cupcakes

Makes 24

A delicious cupcake beautifully decorated is a delight! These mocha chocolate cupcakes with festive buttercream roses are almost too cute to eat -- almost! The secret ingredient, sour cream, keeps these cakes extra moist. (Another baker's trick for locking in moisture is to paint the baked cupcakes with simple syrup before decorating.)

Ingredients:

2 cups all-purpose flour
3/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
2-1/2 teaspoons baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
12 tablespoons (1-1/2 sticks) butter
2 cups sugar
2 large eggs
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
1/2 cup sour cream
3/4 cup strong, black coffee

Vanilla Simple Syrup: (Heat the ingredients in a small saucepan and stir until the sugar is dissolved. Let cool, then use to lock in moisture in the baked cupcakes)

1/4 cup water
1/4 cup sugar
1/4 tsp pure vanilla extract

Frosting:

Vanilla Buttercream (use our recipe, double the recipe, as needed, depending on how much frosting is used on each cupcake, and how many colors are mixed)

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Lightly grease the top of the cupcake pan with a bit of vegetable oil, then place cupcake liners in two 12 count cupcake pans (for 24 cupcakes).
2. Using a whisk, combine the dry ingredients (flour, cocoa powder, baking soda, and salt) together in a large bowl mixing until evenly combined with no lumps visible. Set aside.
3. Combine the wet ingredients (vanilla, sour cream, and coffee) in a separate bowl or larger glass measuring cup. Set aside.

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4. In a large stand mixer, cream the butter and sugar together for 3-5 minutes until smooth and creamy.
5. Add the eggs one by one to the creamed butter, mixing after each addition until fully incorporated.
6. Alternate adding the remaining wet and dry ingredients, beginning and ending with the flour mixture and beating until just blended. Do not over mix, but make sure that the batter is smooth, and not lumpy.
7. Transfer the batter to the prepared cupcake pans by using a cookie scoop, large spoon, or a large piping bag.
6. Bake for 19-22 minutes, or until cake springs back from a light touch, or when a toothpick inserted in the center returns cleanly.
7. Remove the cupcakes from the baking pan, and place on a cooling rack to cool completely..
8. Brush the tops of the baked cupcakes with the simple syrup to lock in moisture before frosting. Let the tops dry completely before frosting - at least 15 minutes.
9. Frost the cooled cupcakes creatively!
10. For large frosting roses, fill a frosting bag with two pink frostings, and a little bit of white frosting for a variegated color. Use a drop flower style tip, and begin the rose from the inside, then spiral out.
11. For smaller roses, use two tones of purple frosting. Use an open star style tip to create the roses, and a leaf tip for the leaves.