Dark Chocolate Chili Cupcakes

NIBBLEDISH CONTRIBUTOR

Ingredients

FOR CUPCAKES

paper cupcake cups based on your cupcake/muffin pan size
Nonstick spray (regular, butter flavor or the kind for baking, either way)
2 2/3 cups all purpose flour
1 1/2 cups unsweetened coca powder
1 tablespoon cinnamon
3 teaspoons cayenne (good quality)
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt
1 teaspoon baking soda
3 1/2 cups sugar
1/3 cup instant espresso
1 1/4 cups buttermilk OR (this is what I use) 5 T dry buttermilk (mixed into dry ingredients)
and 1 1/4 cups of water (mixed into wet ingredients)
3/4 cup vegetable oil
2 large eggs
2 large egg yolks
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
7 oz bittersweet chocolate squares, melted

FOR DARK CHOCOLATE BUTTERCREAM FROSTING

1/2 cup butter flavored vegetable shortening (sorry folks, but this makes the frosting more stable in heat)
1/2 cup softened butter
7 oz unsweetened chocolate squares, melted
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

4 cups confectioners sugar (approx 1 lb)
2 tablespoons of brandy, frangelico or other type of liquor)
4 tablespoons milk

Instructions

FOR CUPCAKES

Preheat oven to 325º. Line cupcake tin with liners. Sift flower, cocoa, cinnamon, cayenne, baking powder, salt, baking soda, espresso powder and dry buttermilk if you're choosing to use it instead of actual buttermilk, into a large bowl. Combine sugar, water, oil, eggs, egg yolks, vanilla and melted chocolate into another large bowl. Using electric mixer, beat mixture until blended. Add dry ingredients slowly, 1 cup at a time. Beat on medium speed until blended, scraping bowl occasionally. If batter seems too thick or you would like fluffier cupcakes (this recipe makes very dense cupcakes), add 2 tablespoons or more of strong coffee.

Spoon batter into cupcakes molds, filling them approximately half full. Bake cupcakes, one sheet at a time, until puffed and center is just firm to touch. Really large molds (think Dunkin Donut's muffin size) will take 25-35 minutes to cook. Regular size molds will approximately 25 minutes. Mini cupcake molds will take 15 minutes. Be sure to check regularly because oven temperatures vary great from model to model.

Transfer cupcakes to rack and cool completely before frosting.

FOR FROSTING

Cream shortening and butter together with an electric mixer. Add melted chocolate and vanilla. Gradually add sugar, one cup at a time, beating well on medium speed. Scrape sides and bottom of bowl often. When all sugar has been mixed in, icing will appear thick and dry. Add liquor and milk, beating at medium speed until light and fluffy.

Keep icing covered with damp cloth until ready to use.

Add 3-4 tablespoons light corn syrup to thin icing for a cake. Or add extra liquor. That's my call.

Makes about 3 cups of icing.