



BIRD'S NEST CUPCAKES

These festive cupcakes, topped with a “bird’s nest,” are a fabulous spring dessert. While the ones in our café include three sweet birds, this recipe calls for malted eggs to make it easy for the home baker. Our straightforward yet wonderfully flavorful almond cake recipe provides a delicious base. Creamy mocha buttercream is a chocolate lovers’ delight and the tasty bird’s nest provides both texture and flavor. The finishing touch of malted eggs is more than just a reminder of spring renewal—who doesn’t love the perfect combination of malt and chocolate? You’ll live up your next gathering with these sweet treats. Happy spring!

- *Leslie Mackie*

INGREDIENTS:

Makes 10 jumbo cupcakes

CUPCAKES

- 1-1/2 cups cake flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup whole almonds, toasted and ground fine
- 1/2 cup + 2 tablespoons low-fat yogurt
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 teaspoon almond extract
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1-1/2 sticks unsalted butter
- 1 cup + 2 tablespoons granulated sugar

BIRD'S NESTS

- 1 cup semisweet chocolate chips
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 1-3/4 cup All-Bran Cereal
- 30 malted chocolate eggs

MOCHA BUTTERCREAM

- 1-1/2 cups semisweet chocolate chips
- 4 egg whites
- 1 cup + 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 1 pound unsalted butter, soft, cut into 1/2" cubes
- 2 tablespoons espresso

DIRECTIONS:

CUPCAKES

Preheat oven to 350°F. Line jumbo muffin tins with baking cups. Set aside.

In a medium bowl, sift the flour, baking soda, baking powder and salt. Add the ground almonds and mix well. Set aside.

In a small bowl, whisk together 2 tablespoons of yogurt with the eggs, almond and vanilla extracts. Set aside.

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, cream the butter and sugar for 3-5 minutes. On low speed, slowly add the flour mixture and remaining 1/2 cup of yogurt. When incorporated, increase speed to medium and mix for 1 minute. Scrape the edges of the bowl occasionally to be sure all ingredients get fully mixed in. Add the egg mixture in three additions, mixing for 20 seconds after each addition.

Using an ice cream scoop, fill the liners 3/4 full. Smooth the tops for even baking.

Bake on center rack for 30-35 minutes, or until a toothpick comes out clean. Let cool on a rack for 1 hour.

BIRD'S NESTS

Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper and set aside.

Place the chocolate chips and canola oil in a small stainless steel bowl over a saucepan with 2" of water. Over low heat, stir with a rubber spatula until melted and smooth.

In another bowl, add the cereal and pour the melted chocolate over it. Toss to coat thoroughly. With a small ice cream scoop or tablespoon, scoop a golf ball-sized

portion of cereal and place it on the lined baking sheet. Repeat, creating 10 evenly sized balls, spaced 3" from each other. With the back of a spoon, shape the nest by moving the center out and creating a 2" circle that looks like a nest. Fill each nest with 3 malted eggs.

Place the baking sheet in the refrigerator for 5 minutes to allow the chocolate to set.

MOCHA BUTTERCREAM

Place the chocolate chips in a small stainless steel bowl over a saucepan with 2" of water. Over low heat, stir with a rubber spatula until melted. Remove bowl from the saucepan and let cool at room temperature.

In a separate small bowl, whisk the egg whites and sugar until combined. Place the bowl over a saucepan with 2" of water. Over medium heat, continue to whisk until the mixture reaches 120°F.

Transfer the mixture into the bowl of a stand mixer. With a whisk attachment, whip for 5-8 minutes to create a soft peak meringue.

With the mixer running, gradually add the small cubes of soft butter. When the butter is incorporated, add the melted chocolate, scraping down the sides frequently. Add espresso and mix until smooth. Set aside.

ASSEMBLY

Top each cupcake with a golf ball-sized dollop of buttercream and spread it to the edges in an attractive way. Top each cupcake with a chilled bird’s nest. Enjoy!