

Cherry Limeade Cupcakes

Makes about 30 cupcakes

Ingredients:

Cupcakes:

3 cups + 1 Tbsp. Cake Flour	2 cups minus 1 Tbsp. Granulated Sugar
$\frac{3}{4}$ tsp Salt	5 Eggs
2 tsp. Baking Powder	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup + 2 Tbsp. Limeade concentrate, thawed
1 cup (2 sticks) Unsalted Butter	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup Buttermilk
Zest from 1 Lime	

Lime Curd:

6 Egg Yolks	Blue & Green liquid food coloring (optional)
$\frac{3}{4}$ cup Baker's Sugar	Zest and Juice from 3 Limes
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup (1 stick) Unsalted Butter, room temperature and cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ " chunks	

Icing:

(If you like to pipe large mounds of icing on your cupcakes, like I do, then you will probably want to double this recipe)

5 Large Egg Whites	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. cherry extract
1 Cup plus 2 Tbsp. granulated sugar	Pinch of Salt
1 (10 oz) jar maraschino cherries, drained	
1 lb. (4 sticks) Unsalted Butter, room temperature and cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ " chunks	

Instructions:

Cupcakes:

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Line muffin pan with cupcake liners.
2. Sift together flour, salt, and baking powder. Set aside.
3. Mix zest into sugar and use a spoon to smash it into the sugar for about 5 minutes to release its oils.
4. Cream butter and sugar mixture in an electric mixer until well blended. Scrape down sides as needed.
5. Add eggs, one at a time.
6. Mix limeade and buttermilk together in a separate bowl.
7. On low speed, add one third of dry ingredients to butter mixture, alternating with half of liquids. Repeat then end with final third of dry ingredients. Mix well after each addition.
8. Once everything is blended, increase speed on mixer to medium and beat one more minute.
9. Fill liners half full. Use small spatula to smooth tops if necessary.
10. Bake for 13-15 minutes. They are done when a toothpick poked in the middle of a cupcake comes out clean. They do not turn a golden brown color like most cakes so don't use that as an indication of doneness.

Lime Curd:

1. Bring some water to a simmer in a double boiler.
2. Whisk all ingredients, except butter, together in top bowl of double boiler.
3. Place on top of double boiler and stir continuously with a wooden spoon until mixture becomes thick and coats the back of the spoon, about 10 minutes.
4. Remove from the heat and slowly add butter. Mix until completely melted. You can also add food coloring at this time, if desired. Start with a drop or 2 of blue to balance out the natural yellow color then add a drop or 2 of green if a stronger green is desired.
5. Strain mixture through a sieve into a bowl.
6. Place plastic wrap on the surface of the curd and place in refrigerator until it has thickened, at least 4 hours.

Icing:

1. Remove stems from cherries (if applicable) and place in a blender. Puree until no longer chunky.
2. Combine egg whites, sugar and salt in the bowl of a standing mixer.

3. Place bowl over a pot of simmering water (don't allow bottom of bowl to touch water) and whisk mixture until warm to the touch and sugar has completely dissolved (test by rubbing a small amount between your fingers. It should feel completely smooth.)
4. Attach the bowl to the mixer and add the whisk attachment. Start on low speed and gradually increase to medium-high, whisking until stiff (but not dry) peaks form. Continue mixing until the mixture is fluffy and completely cool (the bottom of the bowl should feel cool to the touch). This should take around 10 minutes.
5. With mixer on medium-low speed, add the butter a couple of chunks at a time, mixing well after each addition. Don't worry if the icing looks like it's starting to curdle, just keep mixing and it will eventually smooth back out.
6. Once butter is all added, add cherry extract.
7. Switch to the paddle attachment. Scrape down sides of the bowl and add cherry puree. Continue mixing on low speed until air bubbles are eliminated is frosting is completely smooth, about 3 or 4 minutes.
8. Use immediately or store in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. When ready to use, bring to room temperature and beat with paddle attachment on low speed for about 5 minutes until smooth again.
9. Store finished cupcakes in refrigerator but bring to room temperature before eating.