

Spiced Pumpkin Cupcakes with Cream Cheese Frosting

Yield: 24-27 standard sized cupcakes

1 ½ sticks	unsalted butter, softened
2 ¼ cups	all-purpose flour
2 tsp	baking powder (-1/8 tsp for high altitude)
1 tsp	baking soda
1 tsp	cinnamon
½ tsp	ground allspice
½ tsp	nutmeg
½ tsp	cloves
½ tsp	salt
1 ¼ cups	canned pumpkin (15 oz. can, not pie filling)
¾ cup	well-shaken buttermilk
1 tsp	vanilla
1 ¼ cups	granulated sugar
3	large eggs

Place the oven rack in the middle position and preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Prepare cupcake pans with cupcake liners.

Whisk together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, spices and salt in a bowl. In a separate bowl, whisk together the pumpkin, buttermilk and vanilla.

In the bowl of a mixer, beat together the butter and sugar at medium-high speed until pale and fluffy, about 3-5 minutes. Add eggs one at a time, until well incorporated, scraping the sides of the bowl as necessary. Reduce the speed to low and add the flour and pumpkin alternately, beginning and ending with the flour, and mix until the batter is just combined.

Spoon the batter into the cupcake liners about ½ full and bake about 18-20 minutes or until a wooden skewer inserted into the center comes out clean. Cool the cupcakes on a rack completely prior to frosting.

Recipe adapted from The Best of Gourmet

Cream Cheese Frosting:

Yield: Frosts 24-30 cupcakes

2-8 oz. packages	cream cheese, room temperature
2 sticks	unsalted butter, room temperature
3 cups	confectioner's sugar, sifted
2 tsp	vanilla
1 Tbsp	heavy whipping cream

Beat the cream cheese and butter together in the bowl of a stand mixer on medium high speed until light and fluffy. Decrease the speed to low and slowly add the confectioner's sugar until incorporated, scraping the sides of the bowl as necessary. Add the vanilla and the heavy whipping cream and mix until smooth.

Pumpkin Seed Brittle:

Yield: 1 ¾ lbs or (28) 1 oz. servings

¼ cup	butter, cut into chunks
1 tsp	baking soda
1 Tbsp	vanilla
1 ½ tsp	ground cinnamon
½ tsp	salt
2 ½ cups	granulated sugar
1/3 cup	light corn syrup
1 ½ cups	toasted hulled pumpkin seeds

Prepare a baking sheet with parchment paper or lightly butter and set aside. Place pumpkin seeds in a large sauté pan and heat over medium-low heat to toast, about 5-8 minutes. Make sure to shake or stir the seeds occasionally to ensure even toasting. Set aside to cool.

In a small bowl, stir the baking soda in the vanilla to dissolve and also set aside. In another bowl, mix together the cinnamon and salt. This will help the cinnamon to distribute evenly when stirred into the sugar mixture. Have all of your ingredients measured and ready to go as once the sugar reaches it's temperature, things move quickly!

In a medium saucepan set over medium-low heat, use a heatproof spatula or wooden spoon to stir together the sugar, ½ cup water, corn syrup and the butter (1/4 cup). Heat the mixture until the butter is completely melted and the sugar is dissolved. Increase the heat to medium and boil the sugar mixture, stirring occasionally, until it turns a deep amber and registers 335 to 340 degrees F on a candy thermometer. This step takes anywhere from 5-12 minutes. Keep a close eye on it to ensure that it doesn't burn.

Remove the sugar mixture from the heat and carefully stir in the vanilla and cinnamon mixtures (they will bubble up). Immediately stir in the toasted pumpkin seeds and pour the mixture into the prepared pan, using a spatula or wooden spoon to spread evenly. Let the brittle cool at room temperature for about 30-40 minutes.

Gently break the brittle into chunks and store in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks. Trust me though; it won't last that long.

Recipe from Sunset Magazine