



Warmly Welcoming Cinnamon-Cayenne Brownies

Makes 24 brownies

Ingredients:

Brownies:

4 oz bittersweet baking chocolate
¾ cup (1 ½ sticks) unsalted butter
1 ¾ cup sugar
3 large eggs, room temperature
1 Tbsp pure vanilla extract
1 Tbsp instant coffee granules
1 cup all-purpose flour
2 Tbsp unsweetened cocoa powder
1 tsp ground cinnamon
¾ tsp ground cayenne pepper
¼ tsp salt
¾ cup mini chocolate chips

Topping:

1 Tbsp powdered sugar
¼ tsp cocoa powder
¼ tsp ground cinnamon
pinch cayenne pepper

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350F. Line a 9 x 13 brownie pan with parchment paper, leaving a 2-inch overhang on two sides, and spray with cooking spray.
2. Melt butter and baking chocolate in a medium bowl over a pot of simmering water. Allow to cool a little.
3. Mix sugar, eggs, vanilla, and coffee in a large bowl. Pour the melted chocolate and butter in and mix together.
4. Sift together flour, cocoa powder, cinnamon, cayenne, and salt. Combine dry ingredients with chocolate-sugar-egg mixture. Stir in chocolate chips.
5. Bake for 20-25 minutes until the top is cracked and papery but a tester comes out with crumbs still sticking.
6. Allow brownies to cool in pan. Cut into 24 pieces.
7. Sift together powdered sugar and spices. Sprinkle over cut brownies, serve, and enjoy!



"The song from the woods first called
on me on a bright June morning
while I sat on the back porch swing
rereading my favorite cookbook."

—RAJANI LARocca, MIDSUMMER'S MAYHEM

Strangely Addictive Peanut Butter Chocolate Chip Cookies with Sea Salt

Makes 18-20 small cookies

Ingredients:

1 cup creamy peanut butter
½ cup white sugar
½ cup light brown sugar
1 large egg
1 tsp pure vanilla extract
1 tsp baking soda
½ cup mini chocolate chips
Sea salt or fleur de sel for garnish

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350F.
2. In a large bowl, mix together the peanut butter, sugars, egg, vanilla, and baking soda. Incorporate the mini chocolate chips.
3. Roll tablespoon-sized balls of dough and place them at least one inch apart on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Flatten slightly with your thumb and sprinkle with a bit of sea salt or fleur de sel.
4. Bake for 7 minutes until the cookies are barely browned.
5. Remove from oven and cool on the pan – they will be delicate while hot.
6. Enjoy!



"Take pains. Be perfect."

—WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Lucky Lemon-Lavender Cupcakes with Blackberry-Lavender Frosting

Makes 18 cupcakes

Ingredients:

For Sugared Violets:

80 violet flowers (grown without pesticides)
1 egg white (or dried egg whites/meringue powder)
½ - 2 tsp water
1 cup ultrafine sugar

For Cupcakes:

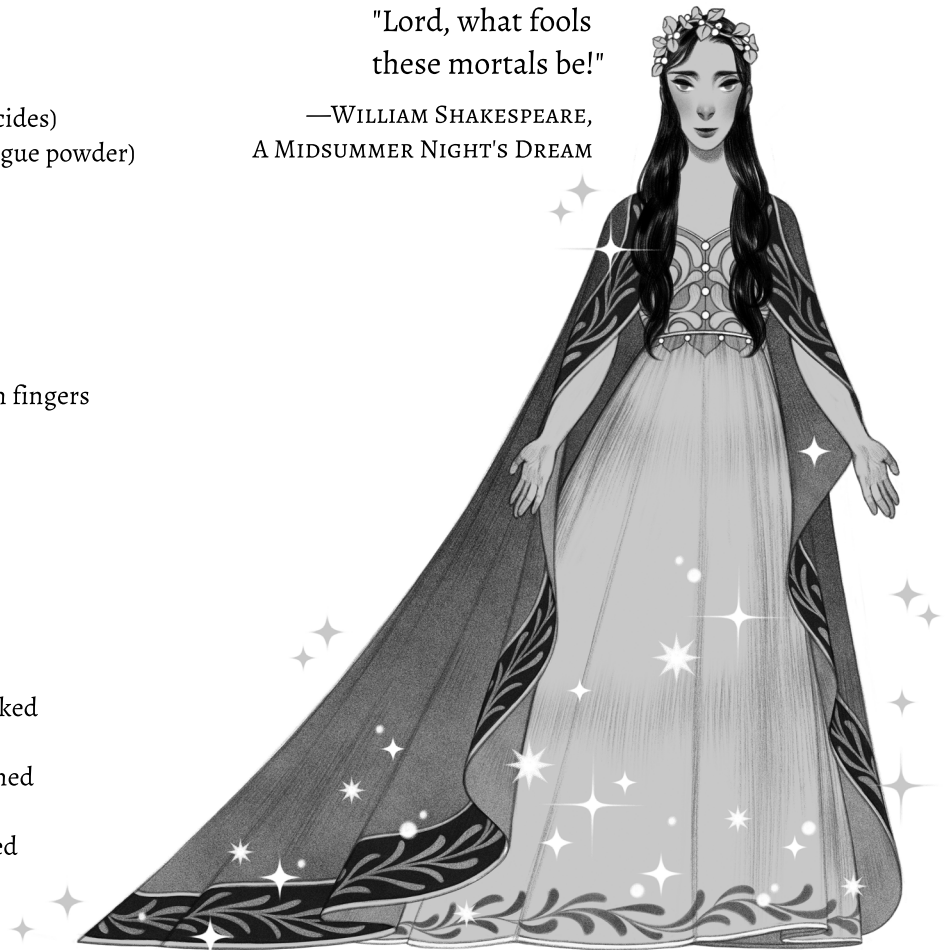
2¼ cups cake flour
1 Tbsp baking powder
½ tsp salt
1 tsp dried lavender, crumbled between fingers
1¼ cups buttermilk, room temp
4 large egg whites
1½ cups granulated sugar
1 stick unsalted butter, room temp
1 tsp pure vanilla extract
1 tsp pure lemon extract
zest of two lemons

For Blackberry-Lavender Buttercream:

1 tsp dried lavender, crumbled and soaked
in 1 Tbsp hot water
½ pint blackberries, pureed and strained
(about 2 Tbsp)
1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, softened
4 cups powdered sugar

"Lord, what fools
these mortals be!"

—WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE,
A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM



Directions:

1. Make the sugared violets: Combine egg white or powder with water, ½ tsp at a time, until it is easy to paint. Using a brush, paint each violet, front and back, with the egg white/water mixture. Holding a flower over the bowl of superfine sugar, spoon the sugar over the flower to completely coat it. Shake off excess and set flowers aside on a wax-paper lined sheet to dry for at least 12 hours.
2. Preheat oven to 350F. Line two cupcake tins with paper liners
3. Make the frosting: combine blackberry puree and lavender. In a mixer, beat butter until light and fluffy. Beat in powdered sugar, 1 cup at a time. Add in blackberry-lavender mixture and beat until just combined. Set aside.
4. Sift together cake flour, baking flour, crushed lavender, and salt.
5. In a bowl, combine sugar and lemon zest and rub together with your fingers until the sugar is pale yellow and smells lemony.
6. Whisk together buttermilk and egg whites.
7. In a mixing bowl, cream butter and lemon-sugar until light and fluffy. Add vanilla and lemon extracts and beat until combined.
8. With the mixer running, alternate adding the flour mixture with the buttermilk mixture, beginning and ending with the flour.
9. Pour the batter into the prepared tins and bake for 16-21 minutes, checking at 15 minutes, until cupcakes have risen and are springy. A cake tester should come out clean.
10. Cool on a wire rack before frosting.
11. Frost cupcakes, top with a candied violet, and enjoy!

Woodland Honey Cookies

Makes 24 Cookies

Ingredients:

3 cups all purpose flour
2 tsp baking soda
¼ tsp salt
1 tsp cinnamon
¾ cup finely chopped walnuts
¾ cup butter, room temp
½ cup brown sugar
¾ cup honey
1 tsp pure vanilla extract
1 egg

Directions:

1. Whisk together the flour, baking soda, salt, and cinnamon. Mix in walnuts.
2. In a stand mixer, cream the butter and brown sugar until fluffy. Add honey, vanilla extract, and egg, and beat until combined.
3. Add the dry ingredients and mix until just combined (don't overmix). Chill the dough in the fridge, preferably for at least one hour; if you're in a hurry, chill the dough in the freezer.
4. Preheat the oven to 350F. Line baking sheets with parchment paper.
5. Use a tablespoon to scoop up dough and place on baking sheets.
6. Bake 8-10 minutes until cookies are just puffy. Allow cookies to cool on the sheets for 5 minutes before transferring them to racks to cool. Enjoy!



“For you and I once played together
Under the banyan tree....”

—RAJANI LARocca,
MIDSUMMER'S MAYHEM



SummerThyme Chocolate Chunk Cookies with Citrus Zest

Makes 30+ Cookies

Ingredients:

1 cup light brown sugar
¼ cup granulated sugar
2 Tbsp fresh citrus zest:
tangerine, orange, or lemon
1 Tbsp finely chopped fresh thyme leaves
1 ½ sticks butter, room temp
2 tsp vanilla extract
2 large eggs, room temp
2 ½ cups all purpose flour
1 tsp baking soda
½ tsp salt
1 ½ cups semi-sweet chocolate chunks

Directions:

1. Combine the sugars, citrus zest, and chopped thyme leaves in the bowl of a stand mixer. Rub them together with your fingers until the sugar is moist and very fragrant. Add the butter, and cream together with the paddle attachment until fluffy and pale. Add the vanilla extract and eggs and mix well.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda, and salt, then add the dry ingredients to the mixing bowl. Mix on low speed until just combined. Add the chocolate chunks and stir in by hand with a rubber spatula, scraping the bottom and sides of the bowl well.
3. Wrap the dough in plastic wrap and chill for 2-24 hours.
4. When you're ready to bake, preheat the oven to 350F. Line baking sheets with parchment paper. Scoop the dough by the tablespoon and place them 2 inches apart on the baking sheets.
5. Bake the cookies for 8-10 minutes, rotating halfway through, until they are light brown on top. Let them cool for 10 minutes on the baking sheets, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely. Enjoy!



"Bake something...something only you in all the world can make..."

—RAJANI LARocca, MIDSUMMER'S MAYHEM

Summers Past Kulfi Cream Puffs with Pistachio Cream

Makes 40-50 2-inch cream puffs

Ingredients:

Cream Puffs:

1 cup water
8 Tbsp (1 stick) unsalted butter, cut into pieces
½ tsp sugar
¼ tsp salt
1 cup all purpose flour
1 tsp ground ginger
4 large eggs
Egg wash: 1 egg, pinch of salt

Pistachio-Ginger Pastry Cream:

3 cups whole milk
¾ cup sugar
2 tsp vanilla extract or ½ vanilla bean,
slit lengthwise
¼ cup cornstarch
1 Tbsp all purpose flour
4 large egg yolks
¾ cup (8 oz) pistachio paste
– can use almond paste if you can't find pistachio
2 Tbsp finely grated ginger
1 tsp cardamom
1 cup heavy cream, whipped to soft peaks
(optional, for a softer filling)

Directions:

For the pastry:

1. Preheat oven to 425F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper. Fit a pastry bag with a ½-inch round tip or snip the end off a large plastic bag.
2. Sift together flour and ground ginger and set aside. Combine water, butter, sugar, and salt in a medium saucepan. Heat over medium heat, stirring occasionally. When mixture comes to a boil, remove from heat and add the flour mixture, stirring to mix. Return to high heat, sitting the whole time, until the dough becomes smooth and away from the sides of the pan (at least 5-6 minutes).
3. Put dough in a stand mixer bowl and mix with paddle attachment until it cools a little. Add in one egg and mix until completely incorporated. Repeat until all the eggs have been mixed in and the batter is very smooth.
4. Put dough in the pastry bag and pipe into 1-inch circles that are about ¾ inch high.



"Are you sure
That we are awake? It seems to me
That yet we sleep, we dream."

—WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE,
A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Directions:

For the pastry (cont.)

5. Beat egg with a pinch of salt and brush on the dough circles.
6. Bake for 10 minutes at 425F, then decrease oven temperature to 375F and bake for 20 more minutes until dough is puffed and golden brown. Decrease the oven to 325F and bake until puffs are firm and not doughy or sticky inside, about 8-10 more minutes. Transfer to a wire rack to cool.

For the filling:

1. In a medium-sized saucepan, stir together 2 1/2 cups of the milk, sugar, salt, pistachio (or almond) paste, ginger, and cardamom. Bring to a simmer over medium heat, stirring to dissolve the sugar.
2. In a separate bowl, whisk the cornstarch, flour, and egg yolks with the remaining 1/2 cup milk.
3. Whisk some of the hot milk mixture with the egg yolks to temper them. This keeps the yolks from turning to scrambled eggs when you add them to the simmering milk.
4. Pour the egg/milk mixture through a strainer back into the remaining simmering milk. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly with a whisk, until the mixture thickens.
5. Remove from the heat and strain through a fine sieve. Stir in the vanilla extract.
6. Top with a piece of plastic wrap (make sure it touches the top of the pastry cream so it doesn't develop a skin), then refrigerate until cool.
7. Use chilled pastry cream to fill the cream puffs (see below). Fold in the optional whipped cream, just before using, for a softer filling.

To assemble:

1. Once the puffs are completely cool, use a serrated knife to slice off the top 1/3 of each puff.
2. Fill the cavities with pistachio-ginger pastry cream. Top each puff with a dot of pastry cream and a toasted pistachio. Enjoy!



Lovely Gulab

Jamun Cupcakes

Makes 12 cupcakes

Ingredients:

For Cupcakes:

1 cup cake flour
1 tsp baking powder
½ tsp cardamom
1 egg
1 cup sugar
2 Tbsp maple syrup
½ cup plain yogurt
5 tablespoons butter, melted
2 tsp rosewater
2 tsp fresh lemon juice

For frosting:

8 oz Neufchatel cheese (low fat cream cheese)
½ stick unsalted butter, softened
¼ tsp salt
4 cups confectioners sugar
1 tsp cardamom
2 tsp rosewater



“She never had so sweet a changeling.”

—WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE,
A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 325F. Line a cupcake pan with paper liners.
2. Combine flour, baking powder, baking powder, sugar, and cardamom in a bowl and stir.
3. Beat together the egg, sugar, maple syrup, rosewater, lemon juice, then beat in the cooled butter and yogurt.
4. Add dry ingredients to wet ingredients and stir until just combined.
5. Spoon into cupcake pain and bake for 15-20 min until golden on top and a cake tester comes out clean. Cool on a rack.
6. While cupcakes are baking, combine frosting ingredients and beat in a mixer with the paddle attachment until fluffy.
7. Once cupcakes have cooled, frost with a fancy tip. Garnish with candied rose petals. Enjoy!

All is Mended

Kesari Bhath Cupcakes

Makes 24-30 mini-cupcakes

Ingredients:

Cupcakes:

½ cup toasted cream of wheat
1 ½ cups milk
1/8 – ¼ tsp saffron threads
1 ¼ cup all purpose flour
½-1 tsp cardamom
¾ cup sugar
1 stick butter, room temp
1 tsp vanilla
1 large egg
1 ¼ tsp baking powder
½ cup chopped cashews
½ cup golden raisins

Frosting:

1 cup cashew butter
1 stick butter, softened
2 cups powdered sugar
2 tsp cardamom
1 ½ tsp vanilla extract
¼ tsp salt
¼ cup heavy cream

Directions:

1. Heat oven to 350F. Line a mini cupcake pan with paper liners
2. Heat milk in a small saucepan, crush the saffron and stir it in to turn the milk a beautiful yellow color. Stir in the cream of wheat and cook over medium heat until all the milk is absorbed and the cream of wheat is cooked a little, about 5 minutes.
3. Cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add vanilla and egg and beat until combined.
4. Whisk dry ingredients together in a bowl.
5. Add cooked cream of wheat to butter/sugar mixture and mix. Add dry ingredients and mix until everything is incorporated.
6. Mix in chopped cashews and raisins.
7. Bake for 15-18 minutes until barely beginning to brown and the cupcakes spring back when touched. Remove from oven and let cool completely.
8. For frosting, beat butter, cashew butter, salt, cardamom and powdered sugar together until fluffy. Add the vanilla and cream and beat until very light and fluffy.
9. Frost cupcakes and enjoy!



"If we shadows have offended..."

—WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE,
A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM