



# Red Velvet Cupcakes with Cream Cheese Frosting

For the cupcakes:

- 2 Tbs. natural cocoa powder
- 1/3 cup (3 fl. oz./80 ml) boiling water
- 1 cup (8 fl. oz./250 ml) buttermilk
- 3/4 cup (6 oz./185 g) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 1 1/2 cups (12 oz./375 g) granulated sugar
- 3 large eggs
- 1 tsp. red gel food coloring
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 2 1/2 cups (12 1/2 oz./390 g) all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. white distilled vinegar

For the frosting:

- 1/2 lb. (250 g) cream cheese, at room temperature
- 4 Tbs. (2 oz./60 g) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 cup (4 oz./125 g) confectioners' sugar, sifted

Candied nuts for garnish (optional)

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Position a rack in the middle of the oven and preheat to 350°F (180°C). Line 18 standard muffin cups with paper liners or grease with butter and dust with flour.

In a bowl, whisk the cocoa into the boiling water. Let it cool to lukewarm, then whisk in the buttermilk. In the bowl of a mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the butter and granulated sugar on medium-high speed until combined. Add the eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Stir in the food coloring, vanilla and salt. Reduce the speed to medium-low and add the flour in 3 additions alternating with the buttermilk mixture in 2 additions, starting and ending with the flour. Beat until just combined. In a small bowl, stir together the baking soda and vinegar, then quickly stir into the batter.

Divide the batter among the prepared muffin cups, filling them about three-fourths full. Bake until puffed for about 18 minutes and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Let it cool slightly, then remove the cupcakes from the pan and cool completely on a wire rack.

Meanwhile, make the frosting: In the bowl of a mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the cream cheese, butter and vanilla on medium-high speed until smooth, light and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Gradually beat in the confectioners' sugar until thoroughly combined. If the frosting is too soft, refrigerate it until it is spreadable, about 15 minutes.

Spread the cupcakes with the frosting. Sprinkle with candied nuts, if desired. The frosted cupcakes can be refrigerated in an airtight container for up to 4 days. Bring to room temperature before serving.

Makes 18 cupcakes.

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