

THE WAY THE COOKIE CRUMBLES



Margarita Cupcakes (adapted from Dorie Greenspan's Perfect Party Cake from *Baking: From my Home to Yours*)

Makes 24 cupcakes

Cupcakes:

3¼ cups plus 2 tablespoons (13.5 ounces) cake flour
1½ teaspoons baking powder
¼ teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon salt
1 cup plain yogurt
6 large egg whites
2¼ cups (15.75 ounces) granulated sugar
1 tablespoon grated lime zest
12 tablespoons (1½ stick) unsalted butter, at room temperature
2 tablespoons lime juice
6 tablespoons tequila
3 tablespoons orange liqueur

Buttercream:

1 cup (7 ounces) granulated sugar
4 large egg whites
pinch salt
24 tablespoons (3 sticks) unsalted butter, at room temperature
4 tablespoons fresh lime juice (from 2 limes)
2 tablespoons tequila

1. For the cupcakes: Center a rack in the oven and preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Line 24 cupcake cups with liners. Sift together the flour, baking powder and salt. Whisk together the buttermilk and egg whites in a medium bowl.
2. Put the sugar and lime zest in a mixer bowl mix with paddle attachment until the sugar is moist and fragrant. Add the butter and beat at medium speed for a full 3 minutes, until the butter and sugar are very light. Beat in the lime juice, then add one third of the flour mixture, still beating on medium speed. Beat in half of the milk-egg mixture, then beat in half of the remaining dry ingredients until incorporated. Add the rest of the milk and eggs, beating until the batter is homogeneous, then add the last of the dry ingredients. Finally, give the batter a good 2-minute beating to ensure that it is thoroughly mixed and well aerated.
3. Divide batter among cupcake liners, filling them $\frac{2}{3}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way. Bake until a toothpick inserted into the center of a cupcake comes out clean, 18-24 minutes, rotating the pans once front to back if your oven bakes unevenly. Transfer the pans to wire racks; cool about 5 minutes, then remove the cupcakes. Cool cupcakes completely on a rack before frosting.
4. Combine the tequila and orange liqueur in a small dish. Using a toothpick or skewer, poke about 10 holes in the top of each cupcake, almost to the base. Brush with the alcohol mixture. Keep brushing the cupcakes until all the alcohol has been used.

5. For the buttercream: Combine the egg whites, sugar, and salt in a metal mixing bowl set over a pot of simmering water. Heat, whisking frequently, until the mixture reaches 160 degrees and the sugar has dissolved. Using the whisk attachment, beat on medium-high speed until stiff peaks form and the mixture has cooled to room temperature, about 6 minutes. Reduce the speed to medium and add the butter, 2 tablespoons at a time, adding more once each addition has been incorporated. If the frosting looks soupy or curdled, continue to beat on medium-high speed until thick and smooth again, about 3-5 minutes more. Stir in the lime juice and tequila; mix just until incorporated. Use a wide star tip to pipe frosting onto the cupcakes, garnishing with tiny lime wedges and lime zest.