

Comforting Carrot Cupcakes

Makes: 12 to 14 cupcakes

Ingredients:

1 1/3 cups all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon baking soda

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1/2 teaspoon ground ginger

1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/2 cup walnuts, finely chopped

2 large eggs, room temperature

2/3 cup sugar

2/3 cup vegetable oil

1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

2/3 cup unsweetened applesauce

1 1/3 cups raw carrots, finely grated

Cream Cheese Frosting:

1/4 cup butter (4 tablespoons), room temperature

4 ounces cream cheese, room temperature

1/4 teaspoon salt (skip if using salted butter)

2 1/4 cups powdered sugar, sifted

1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Line a muffin tin with paper liners or grease lightly with butter or nonstick cooking spray.

In a medium bowl, add the flour, baking soda, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg and salt. Whisk until well combined. Add the chopped walnuts and whisk again until incorporated.

Place the eggs in a large bowl and whisk until lightly beaten, about 15 seconds. Add the sugar, oil and vanilla extract and whisk vigorously until the mixture slightly thickens, about 1 minute. Add the applesauce and carrots and whisk until well combined.

Add the dry ingredients to the batter and use a rubber spatula or wooden spoon to fold the flour into the mixture just until it is incorporated.

Fill each paper cup with batter almost to the top and bake until a toothpick inserted in the center of a cupcake comes out clean, about 22 to 25 minutes.

Remove from the oven and transfer the pan to a wire cooling rack and let cool completely. The cupcakes may deflate slightly as they cool – this is normal.

To prepare the frosting, use a stand or hand mixer to beat the butter and cream cheese until smooth and creamy, about 1 minute. Add the salt and beat again for 30 seconds. Add the powdered sugar and mix on the lowest speed until incorporated, then increase the speed to medium-high and beat until smooth, about 1 minute. Add the vanilla and beat for 15 seconds.

You can use a piping bag, plastic baggie, a spatula or knife to frost each cupcake. The cupcakes can be stored in an airtight container and refrigerated for several days.