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Chih's Orange Cardamom Cupcakes with Honey Whipped Cream

Makes about 14 servings.



Cupcake chef extraordinaire Chih-Chung Fang mixes up a batch of chocolate frosting.

CAKE INGREDIENTS

- 1 stick unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 3/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 1/2 teaspoons finely grated orange zest
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/8 teaspoon baking soda

1 teaspoon ground cardamom

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/2 cup fresh-squeezed orange juice

1 tablespoon heavy cream

CREAM INGREDIENTS

1 cup heavy cream

1/4 teaspoon orange blossom water, almond extract, or vanilla extract

2 tablespoon orange blossom honey

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Mix butter, sugar, and zest (lightly packed) on low speed using the paddle attachment until even, then on high until light and fluffy. Scrape down with spatula periodically to even out mixture.
3. Combine eggs and vanilla in a separate container. Switch mixer to medium speed, and gradually add eggs to butter mixture, only adding more when the previous mixture is well incorporated.
4. Stop mixer, and scrape down bowl and paddle with rubber spatula. Beat on high until mixture is smooth and fluffy again. Stop mixer.
5. Put flour, salt, baking powder (sift or use a sieve to get rid of lumps), baking soda, and cardamom together in a separate bowl. Whisk by hand to combine. Combine juice and 1 tablespoon cream in measuring cup.
6. Add 1/3 of the dry ingredients to the butter mixture and mix on slow until there are just a few streaks of flour left.

7. Then gradually add in 1/2 of the juice mixture and mix until just mixed in. Stop the mixer and scrape down the bowl and paddle.
8. Repeat steps 5 and 6, and then 5 again.
9. Stop mixer and scrape down bowl and paddle one more time. Use spatula if necessary to give batter a mix to make it even.
10. Divide batter amongst 14 paper-lined cupcake molds.
11. Bake at 350 degrees for 15-18 minutes, until the tops feel firm to the touch but still soft and spongy.
12. When cooled, gently remove cakes from pan.
13. In the meantime, combine heavy cream, extract, and honey in clean bowl.
14. Whisk until the mixture forms stiff, but slightly drooping peaks. Towards the end, add more honey to taste as necessary.
15. Serve cupcakes with a dollop of the whipped cream.
16. If you'd like, you can garnish the cupcakes with a drizzle of honey, a bit of freshly grated orange zest, or a light sprinkling of cardamom.

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