Paleo Chocolate Cupcakes

(grain-free, gluten-free, dairy-free)

Prep Time: 10 minCook Time: 26 minReady in: 36 min
Yield: 14 cupcakes

Ingredients

3/4 cup + 21/2 tablespoons (104 grams) Dutch-process cocoa powder

2/3 cup + 2 tablespoons (80 grams) almond flour or almond meal

11/2 teaspoons baking powder (use paleo baking powder, if necessary)

1 teaspoon espresso powder

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/2 cup + 1 tablespoon (126 grams) coconut oil, melted

2/3 cup (213 grams) honey

1/2 cup + 2 tablespoons (160 grams) unsweetened applesauce

2 tablespoons coconut sugar

4 large eggs, room temperature

1 tablespoon vanilla extract

Directions

1. Preheat your oven to 350 °F (175 °C) and line a muffin pan (or two) with 14 liners.
2. In a medium mixing bowl, stir together the cocoa powder, almond flour, baking powder, espresso powder and salt. Set aside.
3. In a large mixing bowl, stir together the melted coconut oil, honey, applesauce, coconut sugar, eggs and vanilla. Add the dry mixture to the wet and stir just until combined.
4. Pour the batter evenly into the muffin liners, about 3/4 full.
5. Bake for 24-28 minutes. A toothpick inserted in the middle should come out mostly clean. A few moist crumbs or a little stickiness is okay, just not raw batter. These are super moist so if it comes out totally clean, they're probably overdone.

6. Let cool for 5 minutes and then remove to a wire rack to cool completely. These do not taste very good straight out of the oven. I recommend letting them sit for 2 hours and then frosting. When you refrigerate them, they become denser, the way brownies get when you refrigerate them. Can be kept at room temperature, unfrosted, for up to 3 days or can be refrigerated for up to 5 days.

Notes

1 batch of frosting will yield just enough for slightly more than 1 tablespoon of frosting per cupcake, which isn't very much for frosting lovers. You may want to do 1 1/2 batches or even a double batch if you want to frost the cupcakes more generously. I used about 1 1/2 tablespoons (1 1/2 batches) of frosting on mine.

Paleo Vegan Chocolate Fudge Frosting
(gluten-free, dairy-free)

Prep Time: 5 minCook Time: 0 minReady in: 5 min
Yield: 1 cup of frosting (enough for a thin layer on 16 cupcakes)

Ingredients

1 cup (170 grams) semi-sweet chocolate chips or chopped chocolate (use paleo / dairy-free / vegan chocolate chips, if necessary)
1/4 cup (60 milliliters) milk of choice (but not canned coconut milk - I used almond milk for the paleo / vegan / dairy-free version)
1/4 cup (56 grams) coconut oill or unsalted butter for a dairy-containing version
1 teaspooh vanilla extract
pinch of salt
for a non-paleo version for the people who are used to traditional sweets:
1/3 cup powdered sugar (see the section after the third picture for notes on this)

Directions

1. In a small saucepan over medium-low heat, mix together the chocolate chips, milk, coconut oil, vanilla extract and salt. Stir until melted and completely smooth. If you want to add powdered sugar, gradually stir it in now.
2. Let the pan cotl for about 15 minutes (or until cool enough to place in the refrigerator) and then place the pan in the refrigerator for about 10-20 minutes, stirring after every 5 minutes, or until firm enough to spread on the cupcakes. I only need about 15 minutes but other people have needed more time (like an hour). If you forget about it and leave it in the refrigerator too long, it'll be too firm to spread, so be sure to keep checking on it. Very lightly reheat it on low heat, stirring constantly, until it's soft enough.
3. Spread 1 tablespoon of frosting on top of each cupcake for a thin layer and 11/2 - 2 tablespoons for a more generous portion. Can also be piped. If doing that, you'll likely need quite a bit more frosting than 1 tablespoon per cupcake. I wouldn't recommend piping a huge mound of frosting, though, as this frosting is very rich! If you have any leftover frosting, cover and store in the refrigerator.
4. Gently reheat on low heat. I keep the frosted cupcakes at room temperature for a day and then refrigerate, just to be safe.