



CUPCAKE LOLLIPOPS



Colorful swirled frosting atop lollipop-inspired cupcakes are a sweet treat for friends and family or an adorable party favor. You can assemble and refrigerate the cupcakes a day or two ahead.

Ingredients

Buttercream:

1 ½ sticks (12 tablespoons) unsalted butter, at room temperature

3 cups confectioners' sugar, sifted

Pinch fine salt

1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

1 to 2 tablespoons whole milk, at room temperature

5 drops bright yellow gel food coloring

4 to 5 drops leaf green gel food coloring

4 to 5 drops sky blue gel food coloring

2 to 3 drops violet gel food coloring

4 drops neon pink gel food coloring

Cupcakes:

¾ cup all-purpose flour

¾ teaspoon baking powder

⅛ teaspoon fine salt

4 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened

½ cup granulated sugar

1 large egg, at room temperature

1 ½ teaspoons pure vanilla extract

⅓ cup whole milk, at room temperature

24 spice drops or gumdrops

Yield: 24 mini cupcakes

Active Time: 1 hour

Total Time: 2 hours

Ease of preparation: intermediate

Special equipment:

Two 12-cup mini muffin pans, 24 mini cupcake liners, 24 lollipop sticks, 6 large disposable piping bags, 1A round piping tip (or any medium-sized round tip), Styrofoam board or tall containers filled with sugar or sprinkles

For the cupcakes:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Line two 12-cup mini muffin pans with paper liners.

Whisk the flour, baking powder and salt together in a small bowl. Set aside.

Beat the butter and granulated sugar together in a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment on medium-high speed until light and fluffy, scraping down the sides of the bowl as needed, about 4 minutes.

Beat in the egg, scraping down the sides of the bowl as needed. Beat in the vanilla. Reduce the speed to medium low; beat in half the flour mixture, then all of the milk, then the remaining flour mixture until just combined, scraping down the sides of the bowl as needed.

Divide the batter evenly among the muffin cups, filling each about three-quarters full. Bake until a toothpick inserted in the center of the cupcakes comes out clean, 10 to 12 minutes, rotating the pans halfway through the baking time. Transfer the pans to a cooling rack and cool for 5 minutes. Remove the cupcakes from the pans and let them cool completely on the rack.



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For the buttercream:

Combine the butter, confectioners' sugar and salt in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment. Mix on low speed until smooth, about 2 minutes. Add the vanilla and increase the speed to medium-high. Mix until light and fluffy, scraping down the sides of the bowl as needed, about 2 minutes more. Add 1 tablespoon of milk and mix to combine. Add more milk a ½ tablespoon at a time until the buttercream is firm but spreadable.

Divide the buttercream evenly among 5 bowls, about a heaping ⅓ cup in each. Add the yellow gel food coloring to one bowl and mix until no streaks remain. Repeat with the remaining bowls of buttercream and the green, blue, violet and pink food colors. Scoop each color into a separate disposable piping bag with no tip; then snip off the tip of each bag so there is a hole about the size of a penny.

Prepare a sixth piping bag fitted with a medium-sized round piping tip; this will be your decorating bag.

Holding the decorating bag in one hand and the yellow buttercream bag in the other, pipe the yellow buttercream into the decorating bag making in a vertical stripe about 1 inch thick. Repeat with the remaining colors, working around the edge of the decorating bag to create stripes of each color and leaving at least 5 inches at the top so you can seal the bag. Be sure not to overfill the bag; you can repeat piping in the colored stripes if necessary.

Once the cupcakes are completely cool, attach them to the lollipop sticks by poking small holes just big enough to fit a lollipop sticks in the bottom of each cupcake with the tip of a paring knife, poking through the paper liners.

Slice ⅛ inch off the bottom (flat side) of each spice drop with a paring knife. Insert a lollipop stick through the domed top of a spice drops and slide it down so there is about ¾ inch of the stick above the spice drop. This is where the cupcake will sit.

Next, poke the lollipop stick into the hole in the bottom of a cupcake and slide the bottom of the cupcake down so it rests on the flat, sticky side of the spice drop. The lollipop stick should not poke through the top of the cupcake; if the cupcake seems wobbly, slide the gumdrop down a bit further and press the cupcake onto the stick a bit more. Anchor the assembled lollipop cupcakes in a Styrofoam board or stick them in tall containers filled with sugar or sprinkles. Repeat with the remaining lollipop sticks, spice drops and cupcakes.

Holding a cupcake in one hand and the decorating bag in the other, starting in the center of the cupcake, pipe the frosting in a swirl over the top of the cupcake. Stick the frosted cupcake back into the Styrofoam to hold it upright. Repeat with the remaining cupcakes.

Serve immediately or refrigerate for up to 2 days; remove from the refrigerator 1 hour before serving.

CANDY LAND

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