**Black Bottom Cupcakes**

The Black Bottom Cupcake looks innocent, but packs a punch! A dark chocolate cake with a dollop of cheesecake baked into it, we top ours with Cream Cheese Frosting for extra impact. The chocolate base is different from our normal chocolate cupcakes – it’s darker, slightly less sweet, and marries well with the cheesecake center. Leave out the cream cheese frosting for a slightly less decadent treat.

**Ingredients**

**12 hole cupcake pan with cupcake liners**

**Chocolate Cake Base**

1 1/2 cups – All-Purpose Flour

 1/2 cup – Sugar

1 tblsp – Sugar (yes… 1 extra tblsp)

 1/3 cup – Unsweetened Cocoa Powder

 (Plus extra to decorate)

 1/2 tsp – Baking Soda

 1/4 cup – Sunflower Oil

1 1/2 tsp – Distilled White Vinegar

 1/2 tsp – Pure Vanilla Extract

**Cheesecake Filling**

4 1/2 oz – Cream Cheese

 1/3 cup – Sugar

1 – Egg

 1/2 tsp – Pure Vanilla Extract

1 pinch – Salt

 2/3 cup – Chocolate Chips

**Cream Cheese Frosting (optional)**

2 1/3 cups – Confectioners’ sugar, sifted

3 tblsp – Unsalted butter, room temp

4 oz – Cream Cheese, cold

**Directions**

**Preheat the oven to 325°F.**

**Optional - Cream Cheese Frosting:** Beat the confectioners; sugar and butter together in a freestanding electric mixer with a paddle attachment on medium-slow speed until the mixture comes together and is well mixed.

Add the cream cheese in one go and beat until is is completely incorporated. Turn the mixer up to medium-high speed.

Continue beating until the frosting is light and fluffy , at least 5 minutes.

**Do not overbeat, as it can quickly become runny.**

**Makes enough to frost 12 cupcakes - Double the recipe for an 8-inch cake**

**Chocolate Cupcake Base:** Put the flour, sugar, cocoa, and baking soda in a large bowl and mix with a handheld electric whisk on slow speed until all the dry ingredients are well incorporated.

Put the oil, vinegar, vanilla and 1/2 cup water in a glass and whisk to combine. While the electric whisk is running in the flour bowl, slowly add the oil mixture, increasing the speed of the blender as the mixture thickens. Continue to beat until all the ingredients are incorporated (scrape any unmixed ingredients from the side of the bowl with a rubber spatula.)

Spoon the batter into the cupcake liners and set aside.

**Cheese Cake Filling:** Beat together the cream cheese, sugar, egg, vanilla and salt in a freestanding electric mixer with a paddle attachment (or use a handheld electric whisk) on medium-slow speed until smooth and fluffy.

Stir in the chocolate chips by hand until evenly dispersed. **Don’t overmix, otherwise the cream cheese will start to split.**

Scoop about 1 tablespoon of the cheesecake filling on top of the cupcake batter in the liners and bake in pre-heated oven for about 20 minutes, or until the cupcakes are firm to the touch and they have an even golden color on the cheesecake filling. **Don’t overbake as the cheesecake will become very dry and crumbly.**

Let the cupcakes cool slightly in the pan before turning out onto a wire rack to cool completely. When the cupcakes are cold, spoon the Cream Cheese Frosting on top and decorate with a light sprinkling of cocoa, if desired.