

Fourth of July Cupcakes

2 large eggs
1/2 cup milk (low fat is fine)
1/4 cup vegetable oil
1/4 cup butter, melted and cooled
1 tsp vanilla extract
1 1/3 cups all purpose flour
3/4 cup sugar
1 tsp baking powder
1/4 tsp salt
1 tbsp raspberry or strawberry jam (optional)
1 tbsp blueberry preserves (optional)
red food coloring
blue food coloring

Preheat oven to 350F. Line a 12-cup muffin tin with paper liners.

In a medium bowl, whisk together eggs, milk, vegetable oil, melted butter and vanilla extract until smooth.

In a large bowl, whisk together flour, sugar, baking powder and salt. Pour wet ingredients into the dry ingredients and whisk just until batter is smooth. Take out two small bowls and place 3/4 cup batter into each one. Add 1 tbsp jam and red food coloring to first bowl and whisk to incorporate. Add 1 tbsp blueberry preserves and blue food coloring to second bowl and whisk to combine. Add additional food coloring (batter should be very brightly colored, use at least 15 drops of each color minimum) as needed until desired color is reached. Divide red batter evenly into prepared muffin cups. Divide blue batter evenly into muffin cups, centering it on top of the red batter (do not attempt to smooth it out!). Divide remaining white batter evenly (again, do not attempt to smooth it out!).

Bake for about 15 minutes, until a toothpick inserted into the center of each cupcake comes out clean and the top springs back when lightly pressed.

Cool completely on a wire rack before frosting.

Cream Cheese Frosting

6-oz cream cheese, room temperature
1/4 cup butter, room temperature
1 1/2-2 cups confectioners' sugar
1 tsp vanilla extract

Beat cream cheese and butter in a large bowl until well-combined. Gradually add in confectioners' sugar until the mixture reaches a thick easy-to-spread consistency. If you prefer stiffer icing, add a little extra confectioners' sugar. Spread on cooled cupcakes.