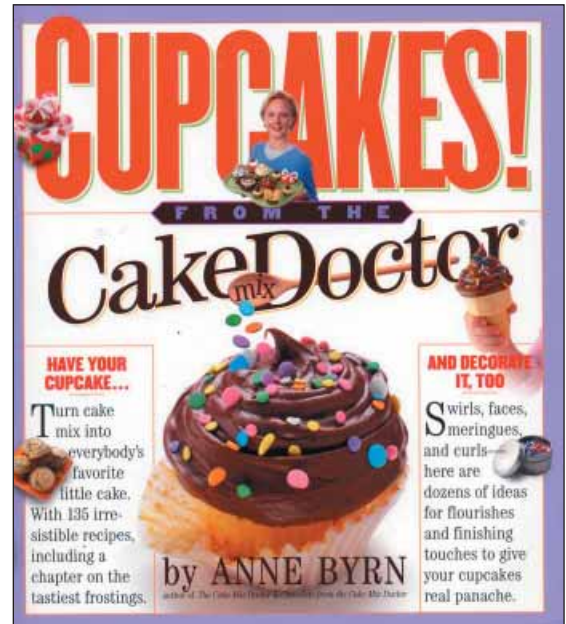


S'mores Cupcakes

from *Cupcakes! From the Cake Mix Doctor* by Anne Byrn



When the sky darkens, the stars appear, and the bonfire is lit, that's the time for ghost stories and s'mores, those irresistible campfire dessert sandwiches made from graham crackers, fire-toasted marshmallows, and chocolate candy bars. This cupcake with s'mores topping is perfect for sleepovers, complete with haunted-house decorations.

MAKES 22 TO 24 CUPCAKES

(2½ INCHES EACH)

PREPARATION TIME: 20 MINUTES

BAKING TIME: 19 TO 22 MINUTES

ASSEMBLY TIME: 15 MINUTES

the Cupcake Doctor says...

Do not use finely crushed graham crackers that come in a box. They do not adhere to the bottom of the cupcake. For increased flavor, use chocolate graham crackers or cinnamon graham crackers.

CUPCAKES:

- 24 paper liners for cupcake pans (2½-inch size)
- 7 whole graham crackers, coarsely chopped (see "the Cupcake Doctor says")
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 package (18.25 ounces) plain German chocolate cake mix
- 1 package (3.4 ounces) vanilla instant pudding mix

- 1/2 cup water
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 4 large eggs
- 1 cup milk chocolate chips
- Marshmallow Frosting (see recipe on pg. 3)
- 2 Hershey's milk chocolate bars (1.55 ounces each), broken into 24 small pieces (total), for garnish

1. Place a rack in the center of the oven and preheat the oven to 350°F. Line 24 cupcake cups with paper liners. Set the pans aside.

2. Place 1 scant tablespoon of chopped graham cracker crumbs in the bottom of each liner. Set these aside. Reserve the remaining graham cracker crumbs for garnish. Set aside 3 tablespoons of the sour cream for the frosting.

3. Place the cake mix, pudding mix, remaining sour cream, water, oil, and eggs in a large mixing bowl. Blend with an electric mixer on low speed for 30 seconds. Stop the machine and scrape down the sides of the bowl with a rubber spatula. Increase the mixer speed to medium and beat 2 minutes more, scraping down the sides again if needed. The batter should look thick and well combined. Fold in the chocolate chips, making sure they are well distributed throughout the batter. Spoon or scoop 1/4 cup batter into each lined cupcake cup, filling it two thirds of the way full. (You will get between 22 and 24 cupcakes; remove the empty liners, if any.) Place the pans in the oven.

4. Bake the cupcakes until they spring back when lightly pressed with your finger, 19 to 22 minutes. Remove the pans from the oven and place them on wire racks to cool for 5 minutes. Run a dinner knife around the edges of the cupcake liners, lift the cupcakes up from the bottom of the cups using the end of the knife, and pick them out of the cups carefully with your fingertips. Place them on a wire rack to cool for 15 minutes before frosting.

5. Meanwhile, prepare the Marshmallow Frosting.

6. Carefully remove the liner from each cupcake, taking care that the graham cracker crumbs don't fall off, before you frost them. Place a heaping tablespoon of frosting on each cupcake and swirl to spread it out with a short metal spatula or spoon, taking care to cover the tops completely. Garnish with the reserved coarsely chopped graham crackers and a piece of chocolate. The cupcakes are ready to serve.

Store these cupcakes, in a cake saver or under a glass dome, in the refrigerator for up to 1 week.

Marshmallow Frosting

While I was developing the S'mores Cupcakes, I knew the frosting had to contain marshmallows. And so it does—marshmallow creme is the main ingredient! This recipe is super easy, just right for those cupcakes you need to bake at 9:00 p.m. the night before the bake sale.

1 jar (13 ounces) marshmallow creme
3 tablespoons regular or reduced-fat sour cream
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

the Cupcake Doctor says...

It's important to soften the marshmallow creme in the microwave. This makes it easier to remove from the jar.

MAKES 2 CUPS, ENOUGH TO FROST 24 CUPCAKES (2½-INCH SIZE)
PREPARATION TIME: 5 MINUTES

1. Remove the lid from glass jar of marshmallow creme and place the jar in the microwave on high power for 45 seconds. Add the sour cream and vanilla extract. With an electric mixer, beat the mixture on medium speed until the frosting is fluffy and well blended, 1 minute.

2. Use to frost any chocolate cupcakes of your choice.

Excerpted from *CUPCAKES! FROM THE CAKE MIX DOCTOR*
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