

# Chocolate Gnome Cupcakes

Poetry & Pies

**prep time:** 40-45 minutes

**bake time:** 25-30 minutes

**total time:** 1 hour, 15 minutes (plus at least 1 day for the red frosting to refrigerate)

**servings:** 24



## Ingredients

### for the cake

- 1  $\frac{2}{3}$  cups (333g) granulated sugar
- 1  $\frac{2}{3}$  cups (227g) flour, sifted
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup (75g) [unsweetened cocoa](#) or cacao powder, sifted
- 2 teaspoons (8g) baking powder, sifted
- 1 teaspoon (5g) baking soda, sifted
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon (3g) fine ground Himalayan sea salt (*or 1 teaspoon table salt, but sea salt gives a better flavor*)
- 2 large eggs, room temperature
- 1 cup (240g) buttermilk\*, room temperature
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (120g) avocado or olive oil
- 1 tablespoon (13g) [pure vanilla extract](#)
- 1 cup (240g) very hot coffee (*light or dark roast is fine*)

### to decorate

- double batch [vanilla buttercream](#) (or your [favorite flavor](#) of white buttercream)
- [red gel food dye](#)
- [1M](#) and [#18](#) (or small star) piping tips
- piping bags
- [caramel baking bits](#) (or other nose-shaped edible item)

## Instructions

1. Make your buttercream at least one day ahead of time. Take about  $\frac{2}{3}$  of it and place in a separate bowl. Add red food dye to this portion, mixing until desired color is achieved. The white can be left as-is or you can beat in a teeny tiny dot of violet food coloring and beat it for 5-7 minutes on high to get a more pure-white color.
2. Refrigerate both frosting colors until ready to make the cupcakes. At that point, remove each bowl of frosting from the fridge and let come to room temperature on the counter. Stir gently to make it spreadable. Place the red in a piping bag with the 1M piping tip and the white in a piping bag with the #18 (or small star) piping tip).
3. Next, make the cake. Preheat your oven to 325. Line [two regular cupcake pans](#) with [cupcake liners](#) (you can use any color-foil liners are a great option, as the chocolate cake will not show through). This is also a great time to set your coffee to percolate (unless using hot water or espresso and hot water, which is what I do).
4. In the bowl of stand mixer (or large bowl), use a [large fine mesh sieve](#) to sift and whisk together sugar, flour, cocoa, baking powder, baking soda, and salt, being sure to sift as instructed. I prefer using a hand whisk for this step as the whisk attachment doesn't always get the very bottom mixed in. Fit this to your stand mixer with the paddle attachment. You can also use a large mixing bowl with a hand mixer. \* I also like to make my coffee at this time so it's fresh and hot.
5. In a separate bowl, whisk together eggs, buttermilk, oil, and vanilla.
6. VERY slowly, pour coffee mixture into the egg mixture, whisking the eggs quickly and constantly to avoid scrambling them. Feel free to do it in increments if this is your first time.
7. Turn mixer to low. Slowly pour wet ingredients into dry. It will clump up halfway through then settle into a liquid-y consistency. Immediately turn off mixer once all ingredients are combined then scrape down sides with a rubber spatula,

making sure to get to the very bottom. Beat on medium for exactly 2 minutes. Do not overmix!

8. Pour batter evenly into prepared pans. Gently tap pans on the counter a couple times to get some of the bubbles out.
9. Bake for 20-25 minutes if using three pans or 15-18 minutes if using four pans, until a toothpick inserted in the middle comes out with some moist crumbs but no raw batter. Always check cakes a little early, as oven time can vary. If not using a convection oven, rotate cakes halfway through.
10. Cool in pans 5-10 minutes then remove to a cooling rack until completely cooled.
11. Once the cupcakes are cooled, you can decorate. Use the red to pipe a tall cone hat. I like starting at the outside, piping in a swirl into the middle, then working my way back toward the edge (but not all the way to the edge) for the second layer then back toward the center for the final pointy top layer.
12. To make the beard, pipe a row of 4-5 small star dots along the edge of the cupcake, where the cake meets the hat. On top and below, pipe a row with one less dot than your starting line. Then, below (what will now be your third row), continue piping rows with one less dot until you reach a point.
13. Place one caramel baking bit in the middle of the beard for the nose.

*Enjoy!*

*If not serving right away, store in an airtight container until ready to eat. Cupcakes will last for 3-5 days. Avoid refrigeration for more than an hour, as this can cause them to dry out.*

*\*You can make your own buttermilk by adding 1 tablespoon of white vinegar to a 1 cup measuring cup then filling the rest of the way with room temperature whole milk. Stir and let sit 5-10 minutes.*