

# Cookies & Cream Mickey Santa Cupcakes

Poetry & Pies

**prep time:** 50-60 minutes

**bake time:** 15-18 minutes

**total time:** 1 hour, 20ish minutes *(plus at least 30 minutes for cupcakes to cool)*

**servings:** 24



## Ingredients

### for the black chocolate cupcakes

- red cupcake liners ([foil](#) or [silicone](#) are best to maintain red color)
- 1 ½ cups (350g) granulated sugar
- 1 ⅔ cups (226g) flour, spooned then leveled and sifted
- ¾ cup (75g) [black cocoa powder](#), spooned then leveled and sifted
- 2 teaspoons (8g) baking powder
- 1 teaspoon (5g) baking soda
- ½ teaspoon (3g) sea salt
- 3 eggs, room temperature
- 1 cup (236g) buttermilk, room temperature\*
- ⅓ cup (108g) avocado oil (can sub vegetable, grape seed, or canola oil)
- 1 tablespoon (13g) pure vanilla extract
- 1 cup (240g) hot, light roast coffee (or hot water)

### for the red marshmallow buttercream

- 2 ½ cups (568g or 5 sticks) unsalted European style butter, softened
- 5-8 cups (650-1080g) powdered sugar
- one batch [marshmallow fluff](#) (or two 7oz jars store bought [marshmallow cream](#))
- ½ teaspoon (4g) sea salt
- 1 teaspoon (4g) vanilla extract (optional)
- [red gel food dye](#) (do not use liquid)
- to assemble: [piping bags](#), [1M piping tip](#), [small star tip](#) (anything that looks like a mini 1M), [holly sprinkles](#), and [mini Oreo cookies](#) (at least 48 whole, unbroken cookies)

## Instructions

### make the black chocolate cupcakes

1. Preheat your oven to 325. Line one regular cupcake pan with red cupcake liners. Ideally, use foil or silicone so the cake color doesn't bleed through and alter the "Santa" look. 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).
2. Whisk together the sugar, flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, baking soda, and salt in the bowl of your stand mixer or a large mixing bowl, sifting everything but the sugar (unless yours is fine enough to sift--go for it!). Set aside.
3. In a separate medium mixing bowl, whisk the eggs, buttermilk, oil, and vanilla together until well-blended and fully emulsified, about 1 minute.
4. Very, very slowly stream the hot coffee or water into the wet ingredients, whisking vigorously and constantly as you pour to avoid scrambling the eggs. Feel free to do this in segments if it's easier. If you do scramble some of the eggs, you can run the mixture through your fine mesh sieve to remove the cooked egg bits.
5. Using the paddle attachment, turn your stand mixer to low (or use a hand mixer) and slowly pour the wet ingredients into the dry. This should take about 30 seconds or so. The batter will clump up then thin out. Once you've poured all the wet ingredients, immediately turn off the mixer. Scrape down the bottom and sides. Beat on medium for exactly 2 minutes (set a timer).
6. Evenly divide batter between 24 cupcake liners (they should be somewhere between  $\frac{2}{3}$  and  $\frac{3}{4}$  full). I found an ice cream scoop or [large cookie scoop](#) helps with this.
7. Bake for 15-18 minutes, until a toothpick inserted in a middle cupcake comes out with just a few moist crumbs (ideally not fully clean, as this could mean they're over baked). Check early and rotate halfway if not using convection.
8. Let cool 5-10 minutes in the cupcake pan then remove to a cooling rack to cool completely.

### make the red marshmallow buttercream

9. While the cupcakes cool, make the red marshmallow buttercream.

***optional:** you can also make the buttercream ahead of time, chill it, then let it come to room temperature on the counter for 1-2 hours while you make the cupcakes, just be sure to give it a good stir if it was refrigerated longer than overnight. Refrigeration does deepen the red color, but you want to avoid mixing it too much because it can turn gummy.*

10. If using [homemade marshmallow fluff](#), make that first. You can immediately start on the buttercream once the fluff is done, but remove it to a separate bowl to cream the butter.
11. In the bowl of your stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment or in a large mixing bowl using your hand mixer, cream butter on high until smooth, about 1 minute.
12. Scrape bowl with a rubber spatula then add in powdered sugar, 1 cup at a time. Blend on low then slowly increase speed to high and mix until smooth before adding more. After 4 cups, scrape the bowl, remove about  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup of the frosting to another bowl and set aside for later, then add in the gel food coloring to the remaining frosting. Make it darker than you'd like, as adding the marshmallow and remaining powdered sugar will lighten the color. If it seems to have thinned out a bit, either refrigerate it 5-10 minutes or add another cup of powdered sugar *now* so it's nice and sturdy when you add the marshmallow.

***optional:** if the color isn't getting to a deep "Santa" red, you can chill the mixture at this point, without the marshmallow, to deepen the color. Getting the color right can take a lot of mixing, so it's best to do that before adding the marshmallow, as it doesn't do well with too much mixing.*

13. Once it is nice and red, add the marshmallow fluff. Mix on high until well-blended, about 30-60 seconds. Add the salt and vanilla, if using. Before you mix that in, check color--if it's too pink or light, add more dye along with the salt and vanilla, and blend until fully incorporated. It's best to add the dye along with a needed blending step to avoid over mixing.
14. At this point, taste to see if it needs more sugar. If so, add 1-2 more cups, until the taste is to your liking. Once taste is to your liking, scrape the bowl then mix on high for 20-30 seconds, just to ensure the color is even throughout. If it's sweet enough but not holding its shape like in the photos, refrigerate 10-20 minutes.
15. Place the 1M piping tip in a piping bag and place the red frosting inside it. Refrigerate it while you make the white frosting (but no more than 10 minutes).
16. To the frosting you set aside, add another cup of powdered sugar and blend until smooth. Taste and add a little more sugar, if needed. Add a splash of heavy cream or

milk, if needed, to smooth it out. Blend on high (a hand mixer works well for this) for 2-3 minutes, until light and fluffy and very white. You can also add a drop of [white food coloring](#) if it's not white enough. Stir with a spatula for 1 minute to release air bubbles. Place the small star tip (tips 16, 17, and 18 are all good for this) in a piping bag and add the white frosting to it.

### **assemble the cupcakes**

17. Pipe the Santa hats by starting along the edge of a cupcake, piping in a swirl toward the middle, then move back outward and upward to create a cone shape. If it's your first time piping like this, you can do a few test runs on a piece of parchment and swipe it back into the piping bag when you're happy with the look. If it's warm in your house, refrigerate the cupcakes as you pipe so they set (but no longer than 10-20 minutes or the cake will dry out).
18. Once all cupcakes have their red cone, pipe dots of white frosting along the edges to make the Santa hat fringe then one dot right at the top for the poof ball.
19. Carefully place holly leaves and berries along the edge of the white fringe.

*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.*

Notes:

*\*You can make your own buttermilk by adding 1 tablespoon white vinegar with enough room temperature whole milk to equal 1 cup total. Stir and let sit 10 minutes while you prep the rest of the ingredients.*