

## **VANILLA CUPCAKES**

(adapted from Bobby Flay's Mini Vanilla Bean Cupcakes)

*The Cooks Next Door*

2 1/2 cups cake flour  
1 1/4 teaspoons baking powder  
1/4 teaspoon baking soda  
1/2 teaspoon fine sea salt  
1 3/4 cup sugar, divided  
10 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted and cooled slightly  
1 cup buttermilk, room temperature  
3 Tablespoons vegetable oil  
1 Tablespoon vanilla extract  
6 large egg yolks, room temperature  
3 large egg whites, room temperature  
Creamy Chocolate Frosting, recipe follows  
Sprinkles for decorating, if desired

Adjust the oven rack to the middle position and preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Fill muffin tins with liners .

Whisk the flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and 1 1/2 cups sugar together in a large bowl. Whisk together the melted butter, buttermilk, oil, vanilla, and yolks in a medium bowl.

In a clean bowl of a stand mixer fitted with whisk attachment, beat the egg whites at medium-high speed until foamy, about 30 seconds. With the machine running, gradually add remaining 1/4 cup sugar; continue to beat until stiff peaks just form, 30 to 60 seconds. Transfer to a separate bowl and set aside. Wash the bowl and dry.

Add the flour mixture to the now-empty mixing bowl fitted with the whisk attachment. With the mixer running at low speed, gradually pour in the butter mixture and mix until almost incorporated (a few streaks of dry flour will remain), about 15 seconds. Stop the mixer and scrape the whisk and sides of the bowl. Return the mixer to medium-low speed and beat until smooth and fully incorporated, 10 to 15 seconds.

Using a rubber spatula, stir 1/3 of the whites into the batter to lighten, and then add the remaining whites and gently fold into the batter until no white streaks remain.

Fill the cupcake molds 3/4 full and bake until just firm, about 18-22 minutes. Let cool and frost with Creamy Chocolate Frosting. Decorate with sprinkles, if desired.

## **CREAMY CHOCOLATE FROSTING**

(Adapted from Bobby Flay at [FoodNetwork.com](http://FoodNetwork.com) - adaptations noted)

2 1/2 sticks unsalted butter, softened

1 cup confectioners' sugar

3/4 cup Dutch-processed cocoa (I used dark chocolate cocoa powder)

Pinch of fine sea salt

3/4 cup light corn syrup

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

8 ounces semisweet chocolate, melted and cooled slightly

1 teaspoon espresso powder (I omitted this since I was making them for kids but it would have been a fantastic addition!)

In a food processor (or using a mixer), process the butter, sugar, cocoa, and salt until smooth, about 30 seconds, scraping the sides of the bowl as needed. Add the corn syrup and vanilla and process until just combined, 5 to 10 seconds. Scrape the sides of the bowl, and then add the melted chocolate and espresso and pulse until smooth and creamy, 10 to 15 seconds.