

Chili Con Frijoles

Ingredients

3 tablespoons canola or olive oil (I used Olive Oil)
1 medium onion, peeled and finely chopped
3 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped (I used more)
½ large green bell pepper, seeds removed and finely chopped (I used a full pepper)
½ to 2 small, fresh hot green chiles, finely chopped, seeds removed for a milder chili (I used 2 serranos and most of their seeds) (I used crushed red pepper)

I added:

2 carrots, diced
3 celery stalks, diced
1 package of Trader Joe's Soy Chorizo Sausage, crumbled

1 ½ teaspoons ground cumin
2 teaspoons paprika or pimenton
½ teaspoon dried thyme
½ teaspoon dried crumbled sage
1 teaspoon dried oregano
¼ teaspoon cayenne
1 cup uncooked lentils, picked over and washed
1 cup cooked drained beans (I used 1 can of kidney beans and half a can of black beans, both drained and rinsed)
2 to 3 canned plum tomatoes, drained and finely chopped (I used about 1/4 of a 28-ounce box of chopped tomatoes) (I used 2 14.5 ounce cans of diced tomatoes)
¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro leaves, plus a little extra for garnish (I omitted)
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon yellow cornmeal

To serve: millet (or rice or tortilla chips), 1/4 cup plain yogurt or sour cream (optional), 2 ounces grated cheese (such as cheddar or pepper jack, optional), I served with plain Greek yogurt, shredded Mexican cheese blend, and chopped green onions



Method

Procedure

1. Put the oil in a medium pan over a medium-high flame. When hot, add the onion, garlic, green pepper, and hot green chiles. (I had the carrots, chorizo and celery in at this point too.) Stir and fry for about 3 minutes, or until the seasonings just start to brown. Do let them start to get some color, even if it takes 6 minutes or 10. Turn down the heat to medium-low and continue to sauté for another 3 minutes. Now add the cumin, paprika, thyme, sage, oregano, and cayenne. Stir briskly once or twice and add the lentils, 4 cups of water, the beans, tomatoes, chopped cilantro, and salt. Bring to a boil. Cover, turn the heat down to low, and cook gently for 50 minutes. (I actually let it cook on med-low for 50 minutes, and then left it on low low for a few hours.)
2. Mix the cornmeal with 3 tablespoons water and then pour the mixture into the chili pot. (I didn't mix it with water.) Stir to mix and bring to a simmer. Cover and simmer gently for 10 minutes, stirring now and then.
3. Serve with millet (or rice or tortilla chips), topping each bowl with a tablespoon of yogurt and a sprinkle of cheese and cilantro.

Source: [Serious Eats Blog](#), Adapted from Madhur Jaffrey's *World Vegetarian* (4 servings)

Spinach and Cannellini Bean Dip

Ingredients

- 4 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 2 cloves garlic, minced (I used a bit more)
- 1 10-ounce bag fresh spinach or 2 (6-ounce) bags baby spinach
- 1 (14.5-ounce) can cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 tablespoon (or more) fresh lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper



Method

1. In a large nonstick skillet, heat 1 teaspoon olive oil over medium heat. Add half the garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds to 1 minute. Add 1/2 the bag of spinach and cook until fully wilted, about 2 to 5 minutes. (If there are still large unwilted stems at that point, cut them off.) Remove spinach to a bowl to cool, and repeat the whole process with another teaspoon olive oil and the remaining half of the garlic and spinach.
2. Combine the remaining olive oil, spinach, beans, lemon juice, balsamic vinegar, salt, and pepper in a food processor. If it all doesn't fit at first, pulse a few times with 1/2 the spinach, and then add the rest.
3. Blend until mixture is to the consistency you like. Serve with tortilla, pita, or veggies.

Source: [Serious Eats Blog](#), Adapted from [Giada DeLaurentiis \(2 1/3 cups of dip\)](#)

Pumpkin Whoopie Pies

Ingredients

For the pumpkin 'pies':

- 3 cups** all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon** salt
- 1 teaspoon** baking powder
- 1 teaspoon** baking soda
- 2 tablespoons** cinnamon
- 1 tablespoon** ground ginger
- 1 tablespoon** ground cloves
- 2 cups** packed dark-brown sugar
- 1 cup** vegetable oil
- 3 cups** chilled pumpkin purée
- 2** large eggs
- ½ teaspoon** vanilla extract

For the cream cheese filling:

- 3 cups** confectioners sugar
- ½ cup** (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened
- 8 ounces** cream cheese, softened
- 1 teaspoon** vanilla extract



Method

For the pumpkin 'pies':

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. In a large bowl, whisk the flour, salt, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, ginger, and cloves together and set aside.
3. In a separate bowl, whisk the brown sugar and oil together until combined. Add the pumpkin puree and whisk to combine thoroughly. Add the eggs and vanilla and whisk until combined.
4. Sprinkle the flour mixture over the pumpkin mixture and whisk until completely combined.
5. Use a small ice cream scoop with a release mechanism to drop heaping tablespoons of the dough onto prepared baking sheets, about one inch apart. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes, until the cookies are just starting to crack on top and a toothpick inserted into the center of the cookie comes out clean. Remove from the oven and let the cookies cool completely on the pan while you make the filling.

For the cream cheese filling:

1. Sift the confectioners' sugar into a medium bowl and set aside.
2. In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with paddle attachment, beat the butter until it's completely smooth, with no visible lumps. Add the cream cheese and beat until combined.
3. Add the confectioners' sugar and vanilla and beat until smooth. Be careful not to overbeat the filling, or it will lose structure. (The filling can be made one day ahead. Cover the bowl tightly and put it in the refrigerator. Let the filling soften at room temperature before using.)

Assembling the Whoopie Pies

1. Turn half of the cooled cookies upside down (flat side facing up).
2. Use an ice cream scoop or a tablespoon to drop a large dollop of filling onto the flat side of the cookie. Place another cookie, flat side down, on top of the filling. Press down slightly so that the filling spreads to the edges of the cookie. Repeat until all the cookies are used. Put the whoopie pies in the refrigerator for about 30 minutes to firm up before serving.
3. The whoopie pies will keep for up to 3 days, on a parchment-lined baking sheet covered with plastic wrap, in the refrigerator.

Notes

Mehul made these for pumpkin carving 2009 - delicious!

Source: [Serious Eats Blog \(24 large or 40 small\)](#)

Ghosts of Cupcakes Past

Ingredients

A Better Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough Cupcake
Fluffy Chocolate Frosting
Ghost Toppers

Method

Source: [A Baked Creation Blog \(24 servings | 24\)](#)



A Better Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough Cupcake

Ingredients

- 1 package of plain yellow cake mix (I used Golden)
- 1 package of vanilla instant pudding mix
- 1 cup of milk
- 1 cup of vegetable oil
- 4 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon of pure vanilla extract
- 1 package of frozen chocolate chip cookie dough



Method

Preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F) and have all ingredients at room temperature. Also have your cupcake liners and pans ready.

Place the cake mix, pudding mix, milk, oil, eggs, and vanilla extract in a large mixing bowl and using an electric mixer, beat on low speed until all the ingredients are incorporated. About 30 seconds.

Scrape the sides with a rubber spatula and mix on medium for 1.5-2 minutes. The batter should look well blended.

Set aside 3/4 to 1 cup of the cupcake batter.

Using the rest of the batter, evenly scoop the batter into your cupcake liners/cups - filling them two thirds of the way.

Cut the pieces of frozen cookie dough in half to make 24 pieces.

Place a piece of frozen cookie dough on the top of each cupcake and push it down into the batter.

Using the 3/4 to 1 cup of batter that was set aside, evenly distribute them (about 1 teaspoon for the 22-24 cupcakes)

Place the pans in the oven and bake the cupcakes until they are golden and the tops spring back when lightly pressed with a finger. This should take about 23-27 minutes.

Remove the cupcakes from the oven and let them cool before frosting.

Source: [Recipe from The Cake Mix Doctor Returns! \(24 servings | 22-24\)](#)

Fluffy Chocolate Frosting

Ingredients

- 1** stick of unsalted butter (at room temperature)
- 2/3 cups** of unsweetened cocoa powder
- 3 cups** of sifted confectioners' sugar
- 1/3 cup** of milk
- 2 teaspoons** of pure vanilla extract

Method

Place the butter and the cocoa butter in a bowl and beat with an electric mixer on low until well combined. About 30 seconds.

Add the confectioner's sugar, milk, and vanilla extract.

Mix on low speed under the frosting is light and fluffy. About 2-3 minutes.

Add 1 tablespoon of milk if the frosting is too thick or more confectioners' sugar if the frosting is too thin.



Source: [Recipe from The Cake Mix Doctor Returns! \(3 cups\)](#)

Ghost Toppers

Ingredients

Jumbo gummies aka gumdrops (I used Halloween Peeps)
White-coloured fondant
Cookie cutter
Rolling pin
Modeling stick
Wilton's round piping tip #3



Method

Have your jumbo gummies laid out to be ghostified!

Materials used: rolling pin, modeling stick, cookie cutter, round piping tip #3.

Roll out a thin layer of fondant. Use your cutter to cut the fondant.

It doesn't have to be such a wiggly cutter, if you prefer a smooth circle - go for it!

I didn't do a clean cut, I've never met a ghost, but I think some would have that wispy look on the edge.

Using the round piping tip as a cutter, make two eyes!

If they get stuck, use the modeling stick to poke out the excess fondant.

Next, carefully drape the fondant over the jumbo gummy.

Have fun folding and creating indents to make the ghost's body and "arms."

And you're done! Simple right?

Have these dry for an hour before putting them on top of your cupcakes.

Source: -- (Servings: --)

MM (marshmallow) Fondant Recipe

Ingredients

- 16 ounces** white mini-marshmallows (use a good quality brand)
- 2 to 5** tablespoons water
- 2 lbs.** icing sugar (please use C&H Cane Powdered Sugar for the best results)
- 1/2 cup** Crisco shortening (you will be digging into it so place in a very easily accessed bowl)

Method

NOTE: Please be careful, this first stage can get hot.

Melt marshmallows and 2 tablespoons of water in a microwave or double boiler: Put the bowl in the microwave for 30 seconds, open microwave and stir, back in microwave for 30 seconds more, open microwave and stir again, and continue doing this until melted. It usually takes about 2 1/2 minutes total. Place 3/4 of the powdered sugar on the top of the melted marshmallow mix.

Now grease your hands GENEROUSLY (palms, backs, and in between fingers), then heavily grease the counter you will be using and dump the bowl of marshmallow/sugar mixture in the middle. (By the way, this recipe is also good for your hands. When I'm done, they are baby soft.)

Start kneading like you would bread dough. You will immediately see why you have greased your hands. If you have children in the room they will either laugh at you or look at you with a questioning expression. You might even hear a muttered, "What are you doing?"

Keep kneading, this stuff is sticky at this stage! Add the rest of the powdered sugar and knead some more. Re-grease your hands and counter when the fondant starts sticking. If the mix is tearing easily, it is too dry, so add water (about 1/2 tablespoon at a time and then knead it in). It usually takes me about 8 minutes to get a firm smooth elastic ball so that it will stretch without tearing when you apply it to the cake.

It is best if you can let it sit, double wrapped, overnight (but you can use it right away if there are no tiny bits of dry powdered sugar). If you do see them, you will need to knead and maybe add a few more drops of water.

Prepare the fondant for storing by coating it with a good layer of Crisco shortening, wrap in a plastic-type wrap product and then put it in a re-sealable or Ziploc bag. Squeeze out as much air as possible.

MM Fondant will hold very well in the refrigerator for weeks. If I know that I have a cake to decorate, I usually make two (2) batches on a free night during the week so it is ready when I need it. Take advantage of the fact that this fondant can be prepared well in advance.

Notes

I halved this recipe to make the ghosts for cupcake toppers, Halloween 2009.
Also, the website this is from has some good fondant cake decorating tips!

Source: <http://whatscookingamerica.net/PegW/Fondant.htm> (Servings: --)
