



Chocolate Lover's Weekend

Chocolate Panna Cotta

- 2 teaspoons unflavored gelatin
- 2 cups heavy cream
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup semisweet chocolate, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa
- 1 2/3 cups plain Greek yogurt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

In a small bowl, sprinkle gelatin over 1/2 cup heavy cream. In a medium saucepan, which remaining 1 1/2 cups heavy cream, sugar, semisweet chocolate and cocoa over medium heat until chocolate and sugar has melted. Remove from heat and add in gelatin mixture, stirring until dissolved. Let cool 15 minutes. Whisk in yogurt and vanilla until smooth. Pour mixture into ramekins or wine glasses and chill, covered, until set, at least 6 hours. Top with wine reduction sauce or whipped cream, if desired, before serving.

Chewy Brownies

- 1/2 cup unsalted butter
- 4 oz. unsweetened chocolate
- 2 teaspoons Vanilla Extract
- 1 cup All Purpose Flour
- 2 tablespoon Cocoa Powder (not Dutch-processed)
- 1 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 2 Eggs

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Butter an 8-inch square pan, line the pan bottom with parchment (or waxed paper), and then butter the parchment.

In a double boiler over simmering water, melt the butter and chocolate. Remove the pan from the heat; cool slightly. Stir in the sugar, salt, and vanilla. Mix in the eggs, one at a time, stirring each time until blended. Add the flour and cocoa; beat until incorporated and the mixture is smooth, 30 to 60 seconds. Scrape the batter into the prepared pan and bake until the top is uniformly colored with no indentation and a toothpick inserted in the middle comes out almost clean, with a few moist crumbs clinging to it, 35 to 45 minutes.

Set the pan on a rack until cool enough to handle. Run a paring knife around the inside edge of the pan then invert onto a flat surface and peel off the parchment. Flip the baked brownie back onto the rack to cool completely. Cut into squares with a sharp knife.

Caramel Sauce

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 tablespoons heavy cream
- Flaky sea salt

Bring sugar and 2 tablespoons water to a boil in a small saucepan over medium heat, stirring until sugar dissolves. Increase heat to medium-high and cook without stirring, occasionally swirling pan and brushing down sides of pan with a wet pastry brush, until sugar is a deep amber color, 5-8 minutes. Remove caramel from heat. Add cream and butter (mixture will bubble vigorously) and whisk to combine. Let cool slightly in pan.

Drizzle caramel sauce over brownies and sprinkle with sea salt.

Candied Orange Peel w/ Chocolate

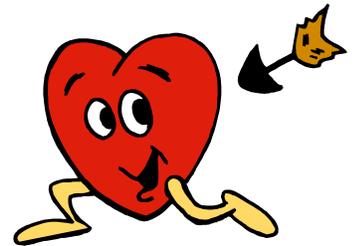
- 6 thick-skinned Valencia or Navel Oranges
- 4 1/2 cups Sugar
- 1 1/2 cups Water
- 1 1/2 lbs Chocolate for dipping
such as Callebaut or Ghirardelli

Peel the skin and pith of the orange into large pieces. Reserve fruit for use in another recipe. Cut the peel into strips about 1/4 inch wide. Put the orange peel in a large saucepan with cold water to cover, bring to a boil over high heat. Pour off the water. Cover peels with cold water again and bring to a boil. Remove the orange peels from the pan.

Whisk the sugar with 1 1/2 cups of water. Bring to a simmer and cook for 8 to 9 minutes (230 to 234°F on candy thermometer). Add the peels and simmer gently reducing heat to retain a simmer. Cook until the peels get translucent, about 45 minutes. Resist the urge to stir the peels or you may introduce sugar crystals into the syrup. If necessary, swirl the pan to move the peels around. Drain the peels and spread out on wax paper to dry (1 to 2 days). Save the syrup for use later to sweeten iced tea. In a double boiler (or in the microwave), melt chocolate, stirring, until it's smooth. Dip pieces of peel in chocolate. Set the coated peels on wax paper and let set up at room temperature, about 2 hours. Store in an air-tight container. Yields about 2 cups of peels.

Red Velvet Cupcakes

- 2 cups All Purpose Flour
- 1 teaspoon Baking Soda
- 1 teaspoon Baking Powder
- 1 teaspoon Salt
- 2 tablespoon Cocoa Powder
- 2 cups Sugar
- 1 cup Vegetable Oil
- 2 Eggs
- 1 cup Buttermilk
- 2 teaspoons Vanilla Extract
- 1 - 2 oz. Red Food Coloring
- 1 teaspoon White Distilled Vinegar
- 1/2 cup prepared plain hot coffee



Preheat oven to 325°F. Line a standard cupcake pan with 24 cupcake liners. In a bowl, whisk together flour, baking soda, baking powder, cocoa powder and salt; set aside. In a large bowl, combine the sugar and oil. Mix in the eggs, buttermilk, vanilla and red food coloring until combined. Stir in the coffee and white vinegar. Combine the wet ingredients with the dry ingredients a little at a time just until combined. Fill the cupcake liners 2/3 full. Bake 20-25 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Do not over bake. Remove from pan and let cool on wire rack. Frost with cream cheese icing when cupcakes have cooled completely. Yields 24 cupcakes.

Cream Cheese Icing

- 1 pound Cream Cheese, softened
- 4 cups sifted Confectioner's Sugar
- 1 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 1 teaspoon Vanilla Extract

In a large bowl, beat the cream cheese and butter together. Gradually add the sugar until incorporated. Increase the speed to high and mix until light and fluffy (about 5 minutes). Add the vanilla and mix. Store in the refrigerator until somewhat stiff, before using.