

PUMPKIN WHOOPIE PIES

Makes 12 traditionally large whoopies (make them smaller if you like, but this is how they are!)

Maine claims these as their official State Pie. Pennsylvania insists that whoopies (known in Pittsburgh as Gobs) were created by the Amish, in Pennsylvania Dutch Country. Drive just about anywhere in the Northeast, and you will find these irresistible cakes in gas stations, supermarkets, and of course bakeries. I LOVE them, and love playing with the infinite possibilities for cake and filling. The most traditional of them all is a plain chocolate cake, always light and fluffy, and usually filled with a Marshmallow Fluff-based filling, or other creamy concoction.



My favorite way to think about a whoopie pie is as something to celebrate with, just because it is so much fun to shout out WHOOPIE! while waving it about, then stuffing a big, soft, velvety bite in your mouth. In fact, during the catering years, these became a mainstay for many pastry trays for bar mitzvahs or weddings - anything, really, that was WHOOP-worthy. We made them in miniature, and turned them on their rounded ends in tiny pastry cups, as though an edible toy wheel. So much fun. So much fun.

This variety is maybe my favorite - a pumpkin cake with a zested cream cheese filling.

Ingredients

Cake (Whoopie Halves)

3 cup all purpose flour
1 1/2 tsp. baking powder
1 1/2 tsp. baking soda
2 tsp. cinnamon
3/4 tsp. nutmeg
3/4 tsp. cloves
3/4 tsp. salt

6 Tbsp. (3/4 stick) butter, room temperature
1/2 cup vegetable oil
3/4 cups packed brown sugar
3/4 cup granulated sugar
3 eggs
One 15-oz. can pumpkin puree
1 cup milk

Cream Cheese Filling

4 1/2 cups powdered sugar
12 Tbsp. (1 1/2 sticks) butter
12 oz. cream cheese
2 tsp. vanilla
1/2 tsp. each of grated orange zest and lemon zest
1/8 tsp. salt

Preparation

Cake (Whoopie Halves)

1. Preheat the oven to 350. Line two cookie sheet or sheet pan with parchment, and set aside. (If you do not have parchment, lightly coat the pan with pan spray or butter.)
2. Mix dry ingredients (flour through salt) in a bowl, and set aside.
3. In the bowl of an electric mixer, beat together butter, oil, brown sugar and granulated sugar on a medium speed for two minutes, scraping the bowl down at least once. Still on a medium speed, beat in the 3 eggs, until well combined. Scrape down the bowl, and then on a low speed mix in pumpkin puree. Add the dry mix alternately with the milk, using half of each with each addition. After all ingredients have been added, scrape down the bowl one last time, and mix one last time so that the batter is homogeneous.
4. Portion the batter, using a 2-oz. scoop (1/4 cup), onto prepared baking sheets. Leave at least 2 inches between blobs.
5. Bake for 6 minutes, rotate the pan, and bake another 6-8 minutes. When they are done, the cakes will feel just set on top.
6. Let cool completely before filling.

Filling and Assembly

1. In the bowl of an electric mixer, combine all ingredients except the powdered sugar, and beat until well blended. Add powdered sugar and mix on a low speed at first, so that the powdered sugar does not poof out. Once it has been minimally incorporated, turn speed up to high and beat for 3 minutes. Stop the mixer twice during the high-speed mixing to scrape down the sides.
2. Spread a generous amount of filling neatly onto a cake half, and top with a second half. Press together gently to make an even whoopie, with the filling just peeking coyly out from the edges.
3. Cover whoops with plastic, or individually wrap each whoopie. Chill for at least an hour in the fridge to allow the filling to set up a bit. Store whoopies in the fridge, but eat at room temperature.