



### Hints, Tips & Ideas For Baking Cupcakes

Cupcakes are big business! For a while now they have been one of the most popular types of baking appearing regularly in magazines, books and on TV which has prompted men, women and children of all ages to have a go. These one portion little cakes have captured the imagination of our nation, inspiring us to be creative with new recipes and decorating ideas. This is a short guide to baking perfect cupcakes, no recipes involved, just some hints and tips to help you along the way and a few fun ideas to try out at home.

- 1.** Looking after your cases is the secret ingredient to cupcake success. When not in use, store your cases in an airtight container as over time moisture in the kitchen can affect their shape.
- 2.** Always preheat the oven before baking and do not put the cupcakes in until the correct temperature has been reached.
- 3.** Make sure all your ingredients are at room temperature before you start.
- 4.** Sieving the flour can help you achieve light fluffy cupcakes.
- 5.** If using a fan oven, reduce the temperature by about 10 degrees and a tray of water at the bottom of the oven can help keep the cupcakes moist.
- 6.** When using cupcake cases, always use a cupcake pan so they keep their shape. If you wish to bake cupcakes straight in the cupcake pan without cases, spray the pan with Wilton Bake Easy Spray or brush the cupcake cavities sparingly with Wilton Cake Release.
- 7.** Try using an ice cream scoop (the one with a release lever) to fill your cupcake cases with mix. This not only prevents mix dripping onto the pan but if you level off the top with a knife each time, it helps you to get exactly the same amount of mix in each case.
- 8.** Divide the cupcake mixture evenly throughout the cases, filling them between half way and two thirds up the case. Half way will give you a softly risen cupcake that is about level with the top of the case whilst two thirds of the way up will give you a domed cupcake.  
  
This does however depend on the cupcake recipe and oven temperature; if the oven is too cool the cupcakes will not rise enough and if the oven is too hot they will rise too quickly and be very domed. If you have a large quantity of cupcakes to make, we suggest you make a test batch first so that you are confident about the recipe and cooking times.
- 9.** Perfectly baked cupcakes should be lightly golden and spring back when gently pressed and as a rule, most cupcake recipes take about 18 minutes to bake. Towards the end of baking keep a really close eye on them as taking them out of the oven too early or leaving them in for just a couple of minutes too long can ruin the cakes. Apart from the obvious, cakes being too soggy or too dry, under cooking or over cooking can also cause paper cases to peel away from the sides of the cupcakes. If you have encountered this problem before and cooked the cakes for

the correct time, try mixing a tablespoon of milk into your batter just before filling your cases.

We also suggest that you do not store your baked cupcakes in airtight plastic containers, cardboard cupcake boxes are more suitable.

**10.** You can check cupcakes are cooked by gently inserting a cocktail stick or cake tester into their centre. If it comes out clean, they are ready to come out of the oven.

**11.** Once out of the oven, leave the cakes in the pan for 5 to 10 minutes to start cooling. This will help the cakes to keep their shape, firm up and set them to the sides of the cases before moving them onto to a wire cooling rack.

**12.** Lastly, always make sure cupcakes are completely cold before decorating.

## Having Fun With Cupcakes

The great thing about cupcakes is that you can experiment and have fun by adding various flavourings and fillings to a basic cupcake mix. After mixing the batter and just before filling the cups, carefully fold in the filling of your choice, for example, blueberries, chocolate chips or marshmallows. For the cakes below, we used our **Madeira Cake Mix (available online, product code MAD1K)** which is a pretty fail safe method as you simply add water, mix and bake. Also available online is a Chocolate Cake Mix: both are really easy to use and taste delicious.

Make sure you choose a recipe that creates a fairly dense cupcake, like muffins or madeira cake, so that any filling you add will not sink to the bottom.

### Lemon Cupcakes

Cover the base of your case with cake mix, add a teaspoon of lemon curd and cover with remaining mix. Alternatively fill your case two thirds with cake mix, make a small indent in the top of the mix and add a teaspoon of lemon curd. Sprinkle a little sugar over the top and bake as normal.



### Mint Chocolate Cupcakes

If you love the combination of chocolate and mint, try crumbling some mint Aero bar into your cake mix. Stir carefully until the chocolate is evenly distributed throughout the mix and pour into cupcake cases for baking. This works well in a plain or chocolate mix and tastes delicious if topped with chocolate buttercream.



### Jammy Cupcakes

Simply cover the base of your case with the cake mix, add a teaspoon of jam and cover with remaining mix. Finish with buttercream or glacé icing.



### Spotty Cupcakes

Create colourful cupcakes by adding some sprinkles. Here we mixed in the **Multi Coloured Sugar Dot Sprinkles**, available online, product code G1372.



### Fruity Cupcakes

If mince pies are a favourite treat of yours, then you will love this little cupcake. Simply add fruit mincemeat to your cake mix (about 1 teaspoon per cupcake) and finish with a drizzle of glacé icing and half a cherry.



### Chocolate Surprise

Take your favourite chocolate, freeze and add to the centre of your cupcake and bake as normal. We had a go with a frozen chocolate cake pop which actually proved to be everyone's favourite.



### Fabulous Flavourings

We have a great range of fabulous flavourings that can be added to a basic cake mix. Even better, choose a combination that complements each other and flavour not only the mix, but the topping as well. Flavours include English Toffee, Irish Cream, Cream Soda, Tropical Delight, Orange, Lemon, Cappuccino, Champagne, Coconut, Raspberry, Violet and Madagascan Vanilla Extract.

