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## Cream cheese-filled chocolate cupcakes make a delectable duo dessert



Photo Susie Iventosch

### Black Bottom Cupcakes with Cocoa Buttercream Frosting

By Susie Iventosch

I used to make black bottom cupcakes with my grandmother when I was a kid, and remember loving them so much. Being both a chocolate and cheese-cake lover, I guess that's not such a huge surprise. But I recently learned that I'd never made these delicious treats for my own kids when they were growing up, and that came as quite a shock. When, I had a hankering to make them the other day, my son and daughter had no idea what I was talking about. What??? I thought I'd made every, single recipe in the family tome by the time they left for college. But, apparently

not. I may need to pour over those files again to see what other fabulous recipes we've missed. So for the very first time, my adult children experienced the joy of biting into these cream cheese filled chocolate cupcakes and they loved them! This time, we added a cocoa buttercream frosting, because really, why not? If you're going decadent, why not go all the way?

These are plenty delicious if you don't have time for the frosting, but if you do frost them, (highly recommend) just one big swirl in the center will do the trick, so you can still see the marbled effect of the chocolate cake batter and cream cheese filling.

### INGREDIENTS

#### Cake

3 cups all-purpose flour  
2 cups granulated sugar  
1/2 cup sifted unsweetened cocoa powder  
2 tsp. baking soda  
1 tsp. salt  
2 cups cold water  
1 cup vegetable oil  
1 tsp. cider vinegar  
2 tsp. vanilla extract  
1 cup dark chocolate chips

#### Cream Cheese Filling

8 oz. cream cheese, softened to room temp  
1/3 cup granulated sugar  
1/2 tsp. vanilla extract  
1 egg  
1 cup dark chocolate chips

#### Cocoa Buttercream Frosting

4 oz. butter, softened to room temp (1 stick or 1/2 cup)  
1/2 cup sifted unsweetened cocoa powder  
3 cups sifted confectioners (powdered) sugar  
1 tsp. vanilla  
1/4 cup +/- milk as needed for consistency

### DIRECTIONS

#### Cake

Prepare 24 regular muffin tins with cupcake liners. Preheat oven to 350 F.

Place flour, sugar, cocoa powder, baking soda and salt in a large mixing bowl. Blend with a wire whisk. Stir in water, oil, cider vinegar and vanilla and blend until smooth. Mix in chocolate chips. Set aside.

#### Cream Cheese Filling

Put cream cheese and sugar in a mixing bowl and beat with electric beaters just until smooth. Add egg and beat until integrated. Don't over beat. Stir in vanilla and chocolate chips. Set aside.

Fill cupcake liners 1/3 full with cake batter. Using a large soup spoon, distribute cream cheese filling evenly over the top of the cake batter.

Bake for 15-18 minutes, or until the cake is done and the cream cheese has sunk into the cupcakes. Cool completely before frosting.

#### Frosting

Beat butter in a large mixing bowl or your standing mixer until creamy and fluffy. Stir cocoa powder into butter using a fork. (If you use the beater, cocoa powder will fly everywhere!) Once the cocoa powder is blended in, you can go back to using the beater.

Beat in powdered sugar, one cup at a time. Alternate cups of powdered sugar with a little bit of the milk at a time. Stir in vanilla. (Note: if the frosting seems too runny, simply add a tablespoon or two of powdered sugar to the frosting and if it is too stiff, add milk, just a spoonful at a time until you arrive at a good spreading consistency.)

Using a pastry bag with a #824 tip and the complementary coupler, pipe the frosting into a beautiful swirl just in the middle of each cupcake so you can still see the marbling of the chocolate and cream cheese filling. If you don't have a pastry bag and tip, simply drop a spoonful of frosting in the middle of the top of each cupcake or spread the frosting with a knife.

Store cupcakes in an airtight container in the refrigerator. When ready to serve, allow to sit at room temperature for about 10 minutes before serving.



Susie can be reached at [suziventosch@gmail.com](mailto:suziventosch@gmail.com). This recipe can be found on our website: [www.lamorindaweekly.com](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com) If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977. Or visit <http://treksandbites.com>

## Warning for pets and people: Don't eat the wild mushrooms!

A family of red fly agarics (*Amanita muscaria*) bigstock images

Amanita phalloides

By Mona Miller, DVM

Wet winter weather brings conditions perfect for soil fungi to grow. The vast majority of the thousands of types of mushrooms in the United States are non-toxic, but there are about 100 species that are toxic, and even fatal. Unless you have thorough knowledge and experience in identifying wild mushrooms, it is best to remove these from the yard, or even eliminate access by your furry dog friend. Toxic mushrooms often tend to have look-alike non-toxic counterparts, so it can be very difficult to tell the difference between these. As a side note, dogs do not necessarily make the association between what they have eaten and feeling sick, so a dog can be a repeat mush-

room eater. Cats can also be prone to mushroom toxicity, but at a much lower level, since they tend to be more discriminating than dogs when eating items in the yard.

Toxic mushrooms can cause a variety of symptoms, ranging from mild intestinal upset to severe liver damage to fatal neurologic disease. It can take a matter of a few hours to a few days for some symptoms to develop. The milder toxicities are generally stomach upset, with nausea, vomiting and diarrhea showing within a few hours and lasting a couple of days. These cases usually resolve with some supportive care such as fluid supplementation,

antacids and anti-nausea medication.

A number of mushroom species can cause initial intestinal upset within hours, and then progress to severe liver failure a few days later. The most common species is Amanita ("death cap") mushroom is Amanita phalloides), which is a look-alike mushroom to other non-toxic species. The classic Amanita is the red cap covered in creamy white dots. However, there are Amanita species that are dull gray and appear to be "safe."

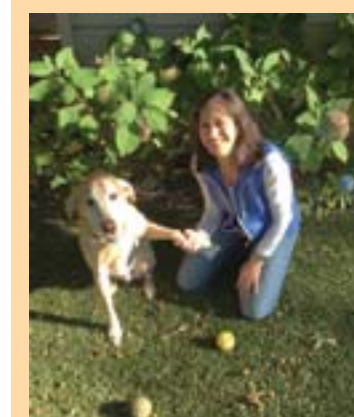
Other types of mushrooms contain muscarine and causes the SLUDGE set of symptoms: salivation,

lacrimation (tearing from the eyes), urination, diarrhea. This set of symptoms is also seen in some pesticides and former flea control products.

The hallucinogenic mushrooms, such as the Psilocybe species, are generally not life-threatening when eaten by a dog. However, these can cause all kinds of neurologic signs, as one would expect from a hallucinogen – howling, wobbliness, rapid eye movements (nystagmus), high body temperature, and abnormal behavior.

Since mushroom identification can be very difficult, veterinary treatment is based on a "worst case scenario" until proven otherwise. Thus,

a known mushroom ingestion is cause for urgent/emergency care. If your dog has eaten a mushroom within the past couple of hours, the veterinarian might give an injection to make the dog vomit anything still left in the stomach. This patient should have blood tests to monitor liver values over the next few days, fluid and medication support, and monitoring for tremors or seizures.



Dr. Mona Miller lives in Lafayette with her son, two cats and yellow Labrador. She attended UC Berkeley as an undergraduate, and received her DVM from UC Davis. She has been happy to call Lafayette home since 2001. She can be reached via email at [MonaSDVM@aol.com](mailto:MonaSDVM@aol.com). She welcomes questions from readers that may get incorporated into a column.

Here are some website resources to learn more:  
Veterinarypartner.vin.com – Mushroom Poisoning in Dogs and Cats  
<https://veterinarypartner.vin.com/default.aspx?pid=19239&id=10020259>  
ASPCA <https://www.aspcapro.org/resource/mushroom-poisoning-dogs>

## Garden Club presentation focuses on natural ways to rid gardens of pests



Submitted by Caroline La Voie

The Orinda Garden Club will feature famed local master gardener David George, who writes a monthly gardening column under the pen name The Naked Gardner. George will be speaking about natural gardening and pest control at 10 a.m. Feb. 24.

George's column, which is published in the Diablo Gazette, delves into eco-friendly, all-natural gardening techniques. During the free virtual presentation, George will speak about natural ways to deal with fruit snatching rodents and other garden pests. To register, visit [www.orindagc.org/community-meeting.html](http://www.orindagc.org/community-meeting.html)

David George

Photo provided