



Baked Chocolate Cherry Reindeer Donuts

1/3 cup packed brown sugar
1/4 cup granulated sugar
2 Tablespoons butter, softened
1 large egg
1 cup whole plain yogurt
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2 teaspoon almond extract
1-1/4 cups all-purpose flour
1 Tablespoon cornstarch
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 cup dried cherry flavored cranberries or dried cherries, finely chopped
1/4 cup finely chopped dark chocolate

Chocolate Glaze:

1 cups dark chocolate chips
1 Tablespoon vegetable shortening

Decorations:

12 large pretzel twists
24 eye ball decorations
12 red M&M candies

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease 12 cups in Teflon donut pans.

In a mixing bowl, cream brown sugar, granulated sugar, and butter, beating until well blended. Add egg; beat well. Beat in yogurt, vanilla, and almond extract.

In another bowl, stir together flour, cornstarch, baking powder, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, finely chopped cherries, and chopped chocolate.

Add flour mixture to sugar mixture; beat at low speed just until combined.

Pipe batter into greased 12 donut cups; filling about 3/4 full. Bake in 350 degree F preheated oven for about 15 minutes or until tests done with toothpick. Cool 5 minutes; loosen; remove from pan to cooling rack. Cool. If the donut hole closed slightly during baking, enlarge the hole in the center before glazing.

Melting Chocolate: Place chocolate chips and vegetable shortening in small microwave safe bowl. Cook on medium high 70% for 1 minute; stir. If not melted completely, microwave for additional 10 to 15 seconds. Stir just until chocolate is melted.

Decorating the Reindeers: Cut pretzels into 24 horns as shown in the picture. Set aside.

Dip or evenly spread melted chocolate over the top light section of the donut to cover the top.

Insert pretzels pieces for horns on each side of donut head; arrange eyes on face and place red nose in the center. Place on waxed paper until firm. Store in airtight container at room temperature. Best eaten within a few days.

Cook's Note: I usually stand my plastic bag in a tall glass and fold the top of piping bag over to keep it clean. It is much easier to pipe the batter into the donut cups. When decorating the reindeers, prepare all the decorations first before melting the chocolate. I found the eyes in the baking section of our local food market. You could also pipe frosting eyes on them but using the purchased royal icing eyes makes it easier.

A Quick Trick: Use already prepared chocolate donuts and a frosting to attach all the decorations. However, homemade donuts taste so good.

About the Recipe: Get ready to have some fun with these donuts. Bake up some chocolate cherry speckled donuts and cover them with chocolate frosting. Then let the family have fun decorating them. They are so cute with those wide eyes and red noses!