



Cherry Chocolate Baked Donuts

Tart sweet cherries, a little chocolate, and oven baked

3-1/2 ounces dried cherries
3/4 cup water
2 cups all-purpose flour
1/4 cup cornstarch
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon baking soda
2 teaspoons cinnamon
2 eggs
1/3 cup packed brown sugar
1/3 cup granulated sugar
1/2 cup cherry juice (reserved from cherries)
1/2 cup Greek plain yogurt
1/4 cup liquid coconut oil

1/2 Tablespoon pure vanilla or almond extract
1/4 cup mini dark or semi-sweet chocolate chips

Chocolate Frosting:

1/2 cup dark or semi-sweet chocolate chips
2 Tablespoons milk
1/2 cup white chocolate chips

Garnish: Colorful sprinkles as desired

Prepare Cherries and Juice: Place cherries and water in medium saucepan; bring to a boil; stir; cook on medium to medium/low heat for 9 minutes. Drain juice from cherries; set aside. Place cherries on paper towels to drain; set aside. When cool; mince cherries; set aside.

Before Baking: Place baking rack on upper shelf; preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Lightly spray 2 or 3 small donut pans with baking spray; set aside.

Combine Dry Ingredients: In a mixing bowl, stir together flour, cornstarch, baking powder, salt, baking soda, and cinnamon. Set aside.

Mix Donut Batter: In another bowl, whisk eggs, brown sugar, granulated sugar, cherry juice, yogurt, oil, and vanilla or almond extract. Pour liquid ingredients into dry ingredients; fold to combine; stir in minced cherries and mini chocolate chips into batter. Do not overmix.

Fill Donut Pans: For easier filling, use a piping bag or resealable plastic bag. (I place my bag, tip side down, in an empty tall glass and fold over the upper edges. Fill the bag with part of the batter; cut off the bottom about 1/2 inch. Watch out as the filling is soft and can run out.)

Pipe or spoon batter into donut pan, filling about 3/4 full.

Baking the Donuts: Bake in preheated 400-degree F oven on an upper rack for about 10 minutes; remove from oven. Remove from oven; set aside for about 5 minutes. Remove to cooling rack. Cool completely.

Frost the Donuts with Dark, Semi-Sweet or White Chocolate:

Chocolate Glaze: Place chocolate chips and milk in a microwave safe bowl. Cook on power 5 in microwave for 1 minutes; stop and stir after 30 seconds; continue cooking until chocolate is melted; stir until smooth chocolate mixture.

White Chocolate: Place chips in microwave safe bowl; cook on power 5 for about 2 minutes, stopping every 30 seconds to stir chocolate until chocolate is melted. White chocolate needs to melt slowly. You can also melt white chocolate in a double boiler if desired.

Frost Donuts: Dip or spread each donut in chocolate mixture; top each with sprinkles as desired. Let chocolate set before serving. (To firm the chocolate faster, place in the refrigerator until firm. Serves: about 15 to 16 donuts

Cook's Note: The small nonstick donut pans tends to bake the bottom of the donut dark and leave the top much lighter. Test with a toothpick to check the doneness. If you frost with only one kind of chocolate, you will need to double the recipe. Note: I used coconut oil but I'm sure you could use some melted Ghee butter if desired.

About the Recipe: Would you love to have a little donut, frosted with sweet dark chocolate? These are easy to make, uses softened dried cherries for a sweet tart flavor, and are dotted with tiny chocolate chips. Serve them frosted with melted dark or white chocolate and don't forget a few sprinkles for the spirit. Have fun!