



Mexican Chocolate Sunset Sandwich Cookies

Time to sit back and take a virtual vacation

Tequila Juice Mixture:

- 3 ounces orange juice
- 2 ounces tequila
- 2 ounces grenadine syrup
- 1 Tablespoon lime juice

Mexican Chocolate Cookies

Dry Ingredients:

- 1-2/3 cups all-purpose flour
- 2/3 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

1/8 teaspoon cayenne red pepper, optional

Mixer Ingredients:

1/2 cup unsalted butter

1/2 cup (each) firmly packed brown sugar; granulated sugar

1 egg

1 teaspoon vanilla

3 Tablespoons unsweetened almond or coconut milk

2 ounces dark chocolate chips, crushed

Tequila Butter Cream Frosting

1/4 cup unsalted butter

4 ounces cream cheese

1 teaspoon grated lime zest

3 cups confectioners' sugar or as needed

1 drop red food coloring

1 cup flaked unsweetened coconut

Garnish: unsweetened cocoa as desired

Prepare Tequila Mixture: In a measuring cup, stir orange juice, tequila, grenadine syrup, and lime juice. Remove and set aside 2 Tablespoons of tequila mixture for the frosting.

Before Preparing Cookies: Preheat 375-degree F oven; place silicone mats on three cookie sheets

Prepare Cookies Dry Ingredients: In a separate bowl, stir flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, salt, and cayenne pepper together.

Mix Cookie Batter: In a mixing bowl, beat butter, brown sugar, and granulated sugar until light and fluffy; add egg and vanilla, beating well. Alternately mix in dry ingredients and remaining tequila mixture and unsweetened almond milk. Stir in crushed dark chocolate. Using 1 Tablespoon scoop of batter for each cookie, place scoops of batter on nonstick pad covered insulated cookie sheets about 2 to 3 inches apart.

Bake Cookies: Bake in preheated 375-degree F. oven for 10 minutes. Remove from oven. Let rest 5 minutes; remove to wire rack to cool completely. Yield: about 26 cookies

Prepare Butter Cream Filling: In a mixing bowl, mix butter, cream cheese, lime zest, and 2 Tablespoons reserved tequila mixture. Gradually add 1-1/2 cups confectioners' sugar; beating until creamy, mix in remaining confectioners' sugar to form a creamy spreadable frosting. Mix in a drop of red color to turn the frosting pink.

Remove 3/4 cup frosting to small bowl to use for decorative frosting flowers. Cover with plastic wrap, chill until thickens.

To the remaining frosting, stir in coconut making sure that the frosting remains spreadable.

Prepare Sandwich Cookies: To fill each cookie: Spread a dollop of coconut frosting over flat side of one cookie; spread towards the edges; top with another cookies, pressing down lightly to distribute filling evenly. Garnish the top of each cookie with a rosette of frosting, using the reserved frosting and a pastry bag with a rosette tube. If desired, lightly sprinkle cookies with unsweetened cocoa. Place cookies in a single layer on a platter to chill in refrigerator until firm for serving. Yield: 13 chocolate sandwich cookies

Cook's Note: For a non-alcoholic cookie, use 5 ounces orange juice in the recipe; omit the tequila. In place of grenadine syrup, I boiled some pomegranate cranberry juice. Also, when adding coconut to the filling, it may require less coconut, depending on the coconut's moisture and flake size.

About the Recipe: Imagine yourself on a beach in Mexico, enjoying a beautiful sunset. Next to you is a refreshing cocktail and some rich chocolate cookies. The cake-like chocolate sandwich cookies are dotted with bits of dark chocolate, filled with a butter cream covered coconut, and highlighted with the flavors of tequila, orange juice, and grenadine. Topped with a light sprinkle of cocoa and garnished with a frosting flower. It's time to dream!