**Red Velvet Cupcakes**

Although most often credited to the American South, no definitive information exists on exactly where red velvet cake originated, how it should be made or why it is red. But this colorful and delicious cake (thanks in part to buttermilk and cocoa powder) is a winner, especially at Christmastime or on Valentine’s Day.

**Ingredients**
- 1 ¼ cups sugar
- 1/3 cup trans-fat-free vegetable shortening
- 2 large egg whites
- 1 large egg
- 1 ½ teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 1-oz bottle red food coloring
- 2 cups cake flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup low-fat buttermilk
- 1 tablespoon white vinegar
- 1 teaspoon baking soda

**Instructions**
1. Preheat oven to 350 F. Line 18 standard-size muffin cups with paper liners.
2. In a large bowl, beat the sugar and shortening with an electric mixer at medium speed until well blended (about 5 minutes). Add egg whites, egg, and vanilla, beating well after each addition. Add cocoa powder and red food coloring, beating until well blended.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk the cake flour and salt. Add the flour mixture to the sugar mixture alternately with buttermilk, beginning and ending with the flour mixture. In a small cup, combine the vinegar and baking soda, then add to batter, stirring well. Spoon the batter into the prepared cups. Sharply tap pans once on the counter to remove air bubbles.
4. Bake 15-18 minutes or until a wooden pick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool in pans 10 minutes on wire racks. Remove cupcakes from pans. Cool completely on wire racks.

**Cream Cheese Frosting**

**Ingredients**
- 10 oz. 1/3 less fat cream cheese, room temperature
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, room temperature
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1/3 teaspoon salt
- 3 cups powdered sugar

**Instructions**
1. In a medium bowl beat the cream cheese, butter, vanilla, and salt with an electric mixer at medium speed until just blended and smooth. Gradually add powdered sugar, beating until smooth. Cover and chill 2 hours before using.

2. makes 2 cups (approximately enough to frost 2 dozen cupcakes)

Recipe courtesy of Enlightened Cakes