

JAPANESE COTTON-SOFT CUPCAKES WITH SAKURA ICING

(adapted from [*Mowielicious*](#))

for the cupcakes:

250g cream cheese
50g unsalted butter
100ml whole milk
1 tsp vanilla paste
60g all-purpose flour
20g cornstarch
1 tbsp lemon juice
6 egg yolks
6 egg whites
1/4 tsp cream of tartar
150g sugar

for the buttercream:

150g unsalted butter
300g icing sugar
50ml heavy cream
1 tsp sakura (cherry blossom) extract
pink colour gel (I used Chefmaster)
sparkling sugar to decorate (optional)
Heat the oven to 300 F. Half-fill a baking tray with water and place on the bottom shelf.
Line a cupcake tray with cupcake cups.

Place the cream cheese, butter, milk and vanilla paste in a bowl over a hot water bath and stir until mixture is smooth and creamy. Remove bowl and allow to cool to room temperature.

Sift the flour and cornstarch into the cheese mixture, add the lemon juice and egg yolks and stir until a smooth mixture forms.

In the bowl of an electric mixer, whisk the egg whites and cream of tartar until frothy, then slowly add the sugar and whisk until soft peaks form. Add the egg white mixture to the cheese mixture and gently fold. Pour into cupcake cups and place in the middle of the oven over the water bath and bake for about 1 hour or until golden brown. Remove from the oven and allow to cool.

To make the buttercream, whisk the butter and icing sugar until crumbly, then add the double cream and flavouring and whisk until smooth. Place the buttercream in a piping bag fitted with a Wilton 1M tip and pipe swirls on the top of the cooled cakes. Decorate with sparkling sugar, if desired.