

marmalade & me

EASY MOLTEN CHOCOLATE MUFFINS



A little thank you gift from me to you

I get my inspiration from all over the place and sometimes it strikes just when I'm not expecting.

On this occasion it was in a well-known, big-brand 'there-seems-to-be-one-on-every-street-corner' coffee shop. I don't mind their coffee, but the food is grim. #2 teenage son had tipped me off that their chocolate muffins were actually half decent, so I decided to give one a try.

It was indeed, rather lovely and what really made my heart sing was the molten centre - what a delicious surprise. I loved the idea of a regular looking muffin with a secret inside, so I set about trying to recreate it.



I love a Chocolate Pot, the kind of dessert that you might enjoy at the end of a fancy restaurant meal and I know that they aren't difficult to make, but they do require precise timing and you can't have them hanging around before you serve them. I was looking for something more 'everyday', the kind of thing that you can make at your leisure and then transform into a chocolatey, molten loveliness when it suits you. Interested?

As always, I wanted a fuss-free recipe and I think I have landed on something exciting ...



THE INSPIRATION

THE SECRET



I've made use of the freezer and the microwave to make this recipe as fuss-free as it is impressive. Basically, this is what happens -

1. Make a simple chocolate sauce (which means just melting 4 ingredients together)
2. Freeze the sauce in a small, shallow box.
3. Once frozen, cut the slab of fudgy, chocolate into 12 cubes.
4. Make a simple chocolate muffin mixture.
5. Put a spoonful of mixture into each of 12 muffin cases, then a frozen chocolate cube in each and top with the remaining mixture.
6. Bake in the oven.
7. You can enjoy them warm from the oven, but the real joy is to wait until they are cold and quickly zap them in the microwave to loosen the molten centre before serving.
8. Sit back and enjoy the delight :)

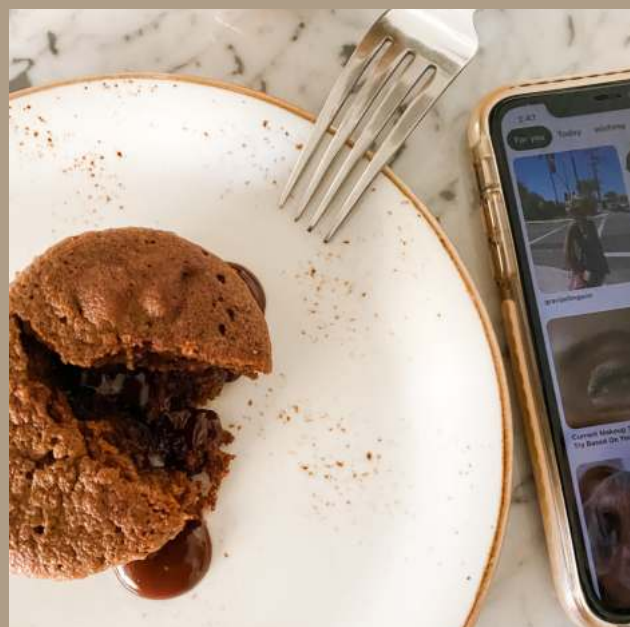
gorgeous!

WHY I'M SURE YOU'LL LOVE THEM

- These really are very easy, AND you can make them ahead of time. I made the frozen chocolate cubes the night before and they were ready to use for the cakes the following morning.
- They make clever use of your freezer and offer a gooey centre without any stress.
- They are high impact, low effort and I'm always a fan of that!
- The muffins are great as they come (for me with a black coffee) but they are also delicious served with ice cream, cream or crème fraiche and a few fruits on the side. I've got a tin of cherries in the cupboard – I think that would also work well. I do like to shower the muffins with a sprinkling of icing sugar because garnish often makes all the difference.
- Incidentally, the melted chocolate mixture also makes a delicious, simple, warm chocolate sauce which is ideal for sundaes or just to add some pizzazz to a bowl of ice cream.



This is a real-life muffin
grabbed by my daughter
from the tin
and heated in the
microwave
for 20 seconds.
An uplifting
teenage revision
snack



THE RECIPE

INGREDIENTS

Chocolate saucy centre

20g (3/4 oz) butter
50g (2oz) dark chocolate (I used 70%), roughly broken
50g (2oz) milk chocolate, roughly broken
125ml (1/2 cup) double cream

Chocolate muffin

225g (8oz) butter or margarine, softened
225g (8oz) caster sugar
4 large eggs
40g (1.5oz) cocoa powder (roughly 3 tablespoons)
185g (6.5oz) self raising flour
1 tablespoon golden syrup
1 tablespoon boiling water

You will also need -

A 12 hole muffin tray
12 paper muffin cases (mine were 50 x 44mm)
a plastic box (approx 90 x 140 mm) lined with cling film and then baking parchment



METHOD

Make the chocolate saucy centre

1. Combine all the ingredients in a heatproof bowl and melt slowly, either in the microwave or on the hob over a pan of water. Stir as you go and stop heating as soon as everything is melted and combined.
2. Pour the sauce into the prepared plastic box and freeze until solid. This will take a few hours or overnight.
3. Remove the frozen slab of fudge chocolate from the box and cut it into 12 cubes. Be sure to put the cubes back in the freezer to keep them frozen while you get on with making the muffin mixture.

Make the muffin mixture

1. Preheat the oven to 190°C/170°C Fan/325°F (gas mark 3) and line the muffin tray with the paper cases.
2. Cream the butter and the sugar until they are light and fluffy. Add the eggs, cocoa powder and flour and beat until fully combined.
3. Now stir in the golden syrup and a tablespoon of boiling water.

Build and bake the muffins

1. Place a dessert spoonful of muffin mixture in the bottom of each paper case, then a frozen chocolate cube in each and top with the remaining mixture.
2. Bake in the oven for 25-27 minutes or until the tops feel firm to touch.
3. Allow to cool and microwave the muffins individually for 20 seconds before serving.

- **Start this recipe a few hours before you want to bake** - you need to allow time for the chocolate sauce to freeze.

- **Making the chocolate sauce** - take it slowly! If you have time, cut the chocolate and the butter into small pieces so that you will need less heat to melt everything. Stir regularly.

- **Choosing a box for freezing the sauce** - I used a small snack box and double lined it so that I didn't get too much mess. You might get away without the cling film layer.

- **Keep the frozen cubes in the freezer once you have cut them up** - otherwise they will be liquid by the time you want to use them.



- **Serve from the oven if you really can't wait** - but allow the muffins to cool for at least 10 minutes.

- **If you want to prepare the muffins ahead of time** - allow them to cool thoroughly and store at room temperature in an airtight box.

- **You will need to experiment to work out how much time the muffins will need in your own microwave** - mine was perfect at 1200W for 20 seconds. I'm confident that everyone knows someone who's happy to take part in this kind of experimenting!

- **If you don't want to warm the muffins** - the centre will remain a little gooey, just not runny.



THE TIPS TO HELP YOU OUT

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