



Banana, Cherry and White Chocolate Cupcakes

adapted from [How to Be a Domestic Goddess](#) by Nigella Lawson

Makes 12 cupcakes

I've hit on the perfect play date treat with these banana, cherry and white chocolate cupcakes. Unusually for a cupcake these days, they're not smothered with any frosting, so they're not messy to eat and don't make for sticky fingers. Plus they don't have too much sugar in them, relying on the bananas for sweetness instead, and I always feel like any treat with fruit keeps it on the right side of indulgence.

125 g unsalted butter
200 g sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3 ripe bananas, mashed
60 ml sour cream or natural yoghurt
2 large eggs, beaten
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
300 g plain flour
40 g dried cherries, chopped (you could substitute dried cranberries or even raisins)
50 g white chocolate, chopped, or use chips or buttons

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Line a muffin tin with paper or silicone cases.

Melt the butter in a saucepan big enough to eventually hold all the batter. Off the heat, add the sugar, vanilla and mashed bananas. Stir in the sour cream or yoghurt and the eggs and beat to mix with a wooden spoon. Stir in the baking soda and baking powder, then add the flour, cherries and chocolate. Mix until everything is just blended (don't overmix!), then divide the mixture between the 12 muffin cases. Cook for 20 minutes, until golden and springy on top and a tester comes out clean. Remove the cupcakes in their papers to a wire rack and leave till cool.



Eton Mess

Serves 4

For a grown-up boozy twist, marinate the strawberries in a generous splash of orange liqueur (like Cointreau or Grand Marnier) for 30 minutes before stirring them into the whipped cream (you could also try creme de cassis, Framboise, grappa, kirsch, or even a little orange juice and vodka). You can also make Eton mess with strawberries, bananas or any summer fruit, though strawberries are considered to be traditional.

Pureeing the strawberries makes this dessert more attractive and heightens the strawberry flavor, but you could be lazy and skip this step (I often do) – simply chop all the strawberries and fold them in with the cream and meringues and it will still be delicious.

450 g fresh strawberries, hulled
1 tablespoon icing sugar
1 tablespoon granulated or caster sugar (optional)
350 ml cream
4 store-bought meringue nests

Cut the strawberries into halves or quarters, depending on their size (you want them to be bite sized). Place about one-third of the berries and the icing sugar in a food processor or blender and process until just pureed (or you can mash them with a potato masher or fork). Place the remaining strawberries in a bowl and sprinkle with the granulated or caster sugar only if you think the berries need a little boost to bring out their natural sweetness (or add some liqueur instead; see above). Set aside to macerate while you whip the cream.

Whip the cream just until soft peaks form. Break up the meringues into bite-sized pieces and add them to the whipped cream, along with the chopped strawberries, reserving a few for decoration. Gently fold in all but a few tablespoons of the puree, marbling it throughout the cream mixture. Spoon into individual serving dishes and drizzle with the remaining puree and reserved strawberries. Serve immediately.