



Chocolate Salted Caramel Cupcakes

from [The Brown Eyed Baker](#)

½ cup plus 1 tablespoon Dutch-process cocoa powder
½ cup plus 1 tablespoon hot water
2¼ cups all-purpose flour
¾ teaspoon baking soda
¾ teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
1 cup plus 1 tablespoon unsalted butter, at room temperature
1 & 2/3 cups granulated sugar
3 eggs
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
¾ cup sour cream

Salted Caramel Frosting

1 cup unsalted butter, at room temperature
8 ounces cream cheese, at room temperature
½ cup salted caramel sauce (recipe below - can be made ahead of time)
4 cups powdered sugar

To Garnish:

Salted Caramel Sauce
Fleur de Sel (or other flaky sea salt)

Make the Cupcakes:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Line standard-size muffin pans with paper liners.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together the cocoa powder and hot water until

smooth. In a separate medium bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda, baking powder, and salt.

3. Combine the butter and sugar in a medium saucepan set over medium heat. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the mixture is smooth, and the butter is completely melted. Transfer the mixture to the bowl of an electric mixer and beat on medium-low speed until the mixture is cool, about 4 to 5 minutes.

4. Add the eggs one at a time, mixing well after each addition, and scraping down the sides of the bowl as needed. Add the vanilla and then the cocoa mixture, beating until smooth.

5. Reduce the mixer speed to low, and add the flour mixture in three additions, alternating with the sour cream, beginning and ending with the flour mixture. Mix each addition until just incorporated.

6. Divide the batter evenly between the prepared liners, filling each about two-thirds full. Bake until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, 18 to 20 minutes, rotating the pans halfway through baking. Let cool in the pan for 10 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.

7. Make the Frosting: Beat together the butter and cream cheese on medium-high speed for 5 minutes (I like to use the whisk attachment for my KitchenAid stand mixer, but it's not necessary). Pour in the salted caramel and beat until combined. Reduce the speed to medium-low and slowly add the powdered sugar, a little at a time, until it has all been incorporated. Increase the speed to medium-high and beat for an additional two to three minutes, until light and fluffy.

8. To finish, pipe frosting onto the top of each cupcake (or use an offset spatula to spread the frosting), drizzle with some additional salted caramel sauce, and sprinkle with a pinch of fleur de sel.

Salted Caramel Sauce

Yield: 2 cups of sauce

Prep Time: 5 minutes | Cook Time: 15 minutes

2 cups granulated sugar

12 tablespoons unsalted butter, at room temperature, cut into pieces

1 cup heavy cream, at room temperature

1 tablespoon fleur de sel (or any other flaky sea salt)

1. Add the sugar in an even layer over the bottom of a heavy saucepan, with a capacity of at least 2 or 3 quarts. Heat the sugar over medium-high heat, whisking it as it begins to melt. You'll see that the sugar will begin to form clumps, but that's okay. Just keep whisking and as it continues to cook, they will

melt back down. Stop whisking once all of the sugar has melted, and swirl the pan occasionally while the sugar cooks.

2. Continue cooking until the sugar has reached a deep amber color. It should look almost a reddish-brown, and have a slight toasted aroma. This is the point where caramel can go from perfect to burnt in a matter of seconds, so keep a close eye. If you are using an instant-read thermometer, cook the sugar until it reaches 350 degrees F.

3. As soon as the caramel reaches 350 degrees, add the butter all at once. Be careful, as the caramel will bubble up when the butter is added. Whisk the butter into the caramel until it is completely melted.

4. Remove the pan from the heat and slowly pour the cream into the caramel. Again, be careful because the mixture will once again bubble up ferociously. Whisk until all of the cream has been incorporated and you have a smooth sauce. Add the fleur de sel and whisk to incorporate.

5. Set the sauce aside to cool for 10 to 15 minutes and then pour into your favorite glass jar and let cool to room temperature. You can refrigerate the sauce for up to 2 weeks. You'll want to warm the sauce up before using.