Vanilla Cupcakes with Cream Cheese Frosting

By Jennifer Segal, cake portion of the recipe adapted from Nick Malgieri's [Perfect Cakes](https://www.amazon.com/Perfect-Cakes-Nick-Malgieri/dp/0060198796/ref%3Dsr_1_1?crid=1BWF2F264QMP7&dchild=1&keywords=perfect+cakes+nick+malgieri&qid=1626198777&sprefix=perfect+cakes%2Caps%2C254&sr=8-1)

*Made with buttermilk, these are the most luscious vanilla cupcakes.*

Servings: 24 cupcakes

Prep Time: 20 Minutes

Cook Time: 20 Minutes

Total Time: 45 Minutes, plus time to cool the cupcakes

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE CUPCAKES

* 2¾ cups all-purpose flour, spooned into measuring cup and leveled-off
* ½ teaspoon salt
* ½ teaspoon baking soda
* 2 sticks (1 cup) unsalted butter, softened, plus more for greasing the pans
* 2 cups sugar
* 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
* 4 large eggs, at room temperature
* 1 cup buttermilk

FOR THE FROSTING

* 12 oz cream cheese, at room temperature
* 1½ sticks (12 tablespoons) unsalted butter, at room temperature
* 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
* Pinch salt
* 4 cups (1 lb) confectioners' sugar

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line two muffin pans with paper liners. Grease the top of the muffin pans with butter so the cupcake tops don't stick.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, salt and baking soda. Set aside.
3. In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment (or beaters), beat the butter and sugar on medium speed until light and fluffy, about 5 minutes. Beat in the vanilla, then beat in the eggs, one at a time, scraping down the sides of the bowl as necessary.
4. Reduce the speed to low, then beat in one-third of the flour mixture, followed by half of the buttermilk. Scrape down the sides of the bowl, then add another third of the flour, followed by the remaining buttermilk. Beat in the remaining flour, then scrape down the bowl and beat again until the batter is just combined. Do not overmix.
5. Spoon the batter into the prepared muffin pans, filling almost to the top. Bake for 20-25 minutes, switching the pans from top to bottom and back to front midway through. Remove from the oven when the cupcakes are set, lightly golden and a toothpick inserted into the center of a cupcake comes out clean (note that one pan may finish cooking before the other). Cool in the pan for about 15 minutes, then transfer to a rack to cool completely.

FOR THE FROSTING

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment (or large bowl if using a hand mixer), combine the cream cheese, butter, vanilla and salt. Mix on low speed until combined, then increase the speed to medium-high and beat until aerated and light, about 2 minutes. Stop the mixer and add 2 cups of the confectioners' sugar; mix on low to combine. Mix in the remaining sugar in two additions, keeping the speed on low. Once all of the sugar is mixed in, increase the speed to medium-high and beat until fluffy, about 1 minute.
2. When the cupcakes are cool, use a butter knife or small offset spatula to swirl the frosting lavishly over top. The cupcakes are best enjoyed fresh on the day that they are baked. To keep them longer, store in an airtight container in the refrigerator, and bring to room temperature before serving.
3. **Freezer-Friendly Instructions:** The cupcakes can be frozen without the frosting for up to 3 months. Let them cool completely, wrap them individually in plastic wrap, and then in foil. Thaw overnight on the countertop before serving. (Wait until the cupcakes are defrosted to ice them.)