

Gluten-Free, Low-Glycemic Strawberry Cupcakes

Ingredients (Makes 12 cupcakes)

For the Cupcakes:

- 1 ½ cups almond flour (or oat flour for a nut-free option)
- ½ cup coconut flour
- 1 tsp baking powder (gluten-free)
- ½ tsp baking soda
- ¼ tsp salt
- ½ cup unsalted butter or coconut oil (softened)
- ¾ cup coconut sugar (low-glycemic)
- 3 large eggs (room temperature)
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ½ cup unsweetened almond milk (or any milk of choice)
- ½ cup fresh strawberries (pureed)
- 1 tbsp lemon juice (optional to enhance strawberry flavor and add moisture)

For the Natural Cream Frosting:

- 1 cup heavy cream or coconut cream (chilled)
- 3 tbsp coconut sugar (finely ground into powder)
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ¼ cup freeze-dried strawberries (crushed into powder)
- 1-2 tbsp cream cheese (optional, for stability and tanginess)

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Instructions

Cupcakes: Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Line a muffin tin with liners.

Mix dry ingredients: In a medium bowl, whisk together almond flour, coconut flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt.

Mix wet ingredients: In a separate bowl, beat the softened butter (or coconut oil) with the coconut sugar until light and fluffy (about 2-3 minutes). Beat in the eggs one at a time, then add the vanilla extract and lemon juice.

Combine wet and dry ingredients: Gradually add the dry ingredients to the wet mixture, alternating with the almond milk. Mix until just combined.

Fold in strawberry puree: Gently fold in the pureed strawberries until the batter is evenly pink.

Fill cupcake liners: Divide the batter evenly among the 12 cupcake liners, filling each about $\frac{2}{3}$ full.

Bake: Bake for 18-22 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.

Cool: Let the cupcakes cool in the pan for 5 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.

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Frosting:

Whip the cream: In a chilled bowl, whip the heavy cream (or coconut cream) until it reaches soft peaks. Gradually add the powdered coconut sugar and vanilla extract, continuing to whip until the cream is smooth and slightly thickened.

At this stage, add **1-2 tablespoons of softened cream cheese** to the whipped cream. Beat on low speed until just combined. Be careful not to overmix, as this can cause the frosting to become too dense. **Pro Tip:** Make sure the cream cheese is **softened to room temperature** before adding it to the whipped cream. This ensures it blends smoothly without creating lumps.

Fold in freeze-dried strawberries: Gently fold in the crushed freeze-dried strawberry powder until evenly distributed. This adds flavor and a beautiful pink hue to the frosting. Enjoy these enhanced gluten-free, low-glycemic strawberry cupcakes with a rich, natural sweetness from coconut sugar! 🍓🧁

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Enhancements and Tips:

Lemon Juice: Adding lemon juice enhances the strawberry flavor and keeps the cupcakes moist.

Coconut Sugar: Coconut sugar adds a rich, caramel-like flavor and is a low-glycemic alternative to refined sugar. Grinding it into a powder for the frosting ensures a smooth texture.

Cream Cheese in Frosting: This optional addition adds stability and texture to the frosting and adds a flavor that complements the sweetness.

Freeze-Dried Strawberries: These intensify the strawberry flavor in the frosting without adding extra moisture.

Storage: Store cupcakes in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. Bring to room temperature before serving for the best texture.