



Zany Zucchini Root Beer Cupcakes

By Erin Fletter

Prep Time 10 / **Cook Time** 20 / **Serves** 4 - 6

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

grate: to reduce food, like a carrot, to very small shreds or pieces of the same size by rubbing it on a tool with an outside surface that has holes with cutting edges (a grater).

squeeze: to firmly press or twist a food with fingers, hands, or a device to remove its liquid, like shredded potatoes, frozen and thawed spinach, or tofu.

wet vs dry: to mix wet and dry ingredients separately before combining them: dry ingredients are flours, leavening agents, salt, and spices; wet ingredients are those that dissolve or can be dissolved (sugar, eggs, butter, oils, honey, vanilla, milk, and juices).

Equipment

- Oven
- Muffin pan
- Paper cupcake liners
- Grater
- Clean dish towel or paper towels
- Large mixing bowl
- Dry measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Whisk
- Rubber spatula

Ingredients

Zany Zucchini Root Beer Cupcakes

- 1 small zucchini, grated
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1/4 C butter, room-temperature ******(for DAIRY ALLERGY sub 1/4 C dairy-free/nut-free butter)******
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 T apple cider vinegar
- 1 3/4 C all-purpose flour ******(for GLUTEN ALLERGY sub 1 3/4 C gluten-free/nut-free all-purpose flour)******
- 1 C root beer (we like Zevia or Virgil's Diet stevia-sweetened root beer)
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract ******(for GLUTEN ALLERGY use certified gluten-free pure vanilla extract, not imitation vanilla flavor—check label)******
- 1/3 C maple syrup/sugar/honey/agave nectar

Food Allergen Substitutions

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Dairy: For 1/4 C butter, substitute 1/4 C dairy-free/nut-free butter.

Gluten/Wheat: For 1 3/4 C all-purpose flour, substitute gluten-free/nut-free all-purpose flour. Use certified gluten-free pure vanilla extract, not imitation vanilla flavor.

Instructions

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preheat + line

Adults preheat your oven to 350 F and have your kids line a muffin pan with paper liners.

grate + squeeze

Have kids grate **1 zucchini** and squeeze out the liquid from the zucchini using a clean dish towel or paper towels over the sink. We want to get the extra moisture out, so our cupcakes stay nice and fluffy! The grated zucchini should equal about 1/2 cup.

measure + add + whisk

In a large bowl, have kids measure and combine **1 3/4 cups flour, 1 teaspoon baking powder, 1/2**

teaspoon baking soda, and **1 teaspoon salt**. Then, have kids whisk everything in the dry bowl together.

combine + mix

In a medium bowl, combine **1 cup root beer**, **1/3 cup maple syrup**, **1/4 cup room temperature butter**, **1/2 cup of grated zucchini**, **1 tablespoon vinegar**, and **1 teaspoon vanilla extract**. Then mix well.

wet + dry + bake + cool

Have kids add wet bowl mixture to dry bowl ingredients and stir until just combined. Please do not over mix! Spoon the batter about 3/4 full into your paper-lined muffin pan. Bake at 350 F in your preheated oven for 15 to 20 minutes, until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Carefully take the cupcakes out of the oven and let them cool completely before adding the **Brilliant Black Pepper Glaze**. (You can also use this batter to make tasty Zany Zucchini Root Beer Mini Pancakes in your nonstick skillet over medium-low heat on your stove).

Featured Ingredient: Root Beer!

Hi! I'm Root Beer!

"Normally, any of you interested in your health would probably never consider soda pop worthy to include in your diet. In particular, soft drinks are singled out more frequently as first on the list of forbidden foods to avoid because they contain high sodium, sugar, unnatural sweeteners (another whole story there!), and various chemicals. Soda pop is generally viewed as a weight-increasing, tooth-rotting no-no. However, I'm a soft drink with some merit: Root Beer!"

One of root beer's early makers and the first to successfully market it, Charles Hires (hence the famous brand name), originally planned his mixture of roots, berries, herbs, and spices to be an herbal tea. As a pharmacist in the late 19th century, he was most likely familiar with the nutritional benefits of many of the ingredients in his root tea recipe.

The beverage he created contains many ingredients long used to produce beneficial effects. Although the drink's formula may vary from one brand to another, the basic ingredients are usually: vanilla, licorice root, sarsaparilla root, sassafras root, nutmeg, anise, wintergreen, cinnamon, clove, molasses, pimento berry, balsam, cassia, malted barley, cherry bark, fenugreek, St. John's Wort, maple syrup, yucca, cane sugar, and corn syrup. We know that corn syrup is largely frowned upon where health is concerned since it is known to be bad for weight control; similarly, cane sugar is also not welcome by most nutritionally-concerned people.

So, why is it called root beer? Before European explorers arrived in the Americas, early Native Americans made drinks and medicine from sassafras root. Then, starting in the 16th century, European migrants applied their brewing techniques to create a sassafras root beverage closer to the root beer we now drink.

Can you imagine getting such healthy influences on your body from other soft drinks currently on the market? Having remained a beverage of choice by countless people for over a century, it does little harm (depending on the amount and type of sweetener) and has a taste that attracts a following. However, if more people knew that many of its ingredients are good for you, would it remain such a top-selling product?