

McCLINTOCK'S COOKERY

with MK McClintock

EASTER CUPCAKES

These delicious and fluffy cupcakes are simple to make. Use any cake recipe (this kitchen recommends homemade recipes only). This first recipe is only slightly adapted from [Martha Stewart's Lemon Cake](#) recipe. This is officially the first Martha Stewart recipe I've ever tried, and I must say, it's not bad. I'm fairly certain Martha won't mind that I've shared, except her recipe is for an elegant lemon cake with whipped frosting. Mine morphed into hippity-hoppity bunny cupcakes.

You see, my niece begged (begged!) to have pink lemonade cupcakes using a box of pink lemonade cake mix she saw at the store. I shook my head. My mother caved. The cupcakes failed. I didn't have a lemon cake recipe handy, and my writing time was already interrupted, so I offered to whip up a batch of homemade lemon cupcakes. Martha's recipe was easy and at my fingertips (since I was already at my laptop writing).



Recipe and image(s) provided by the author. Find more recipes at www.mkmclintock.com/recipes.
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Easter (*or any occasion*) Lemon Cupcakes with Cream Cheese Rainbow Frosting

- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature
 - 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
 - 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
 - 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
 - 1 teaspoon sea salt
 - 2 tablespoons lemon zest
 - 2 cups sugar
 - 2 large eggs plus 3 large egg yolks
 - 1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
 - 1 cup low-fat buttermilk
1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Butter and flour two 8-by-2-inch cake pans, tapping out excess flour. In a medium bowl, whisk flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and lemon zest.
 2. In a large bowl, using an electric mixer, beat butter and 1 1/2 cups sugar until light and fluffy. With mixer on low, beat in eggs and yolks, one at a time. Beat in 2 tablespoons lemon juice. Alternately beat in flour mixture and buttermilk beginning and ending with flour mixture; mix just until combined.
 3. Divide batter between pans; smooth tops. Bake until cakes pull away from sides of pans, 32 to 35 minutes. Let cool in pans 10 minutes. Run a knife around edges of pans and invert cakes onto a wire rack.
 4. While cakes are baking, bring remaining 1/2 cup sugar and 1/2 cup water to a boil in a saucepan. Add lemon slices and simmer 25 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer lemon slices to a waxed-paper-lined plate. Stir remaining 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice into syrup.
 5. Using a toothpick, poke holes in warm cakes on rack. Brush with lemon syrup. Let cool completely. Prepare frosting, substituting 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice for vanilla extract. Frost cooled cakes and top with candied lemon slices.

The Frosting and Decorations:

- I recommend a [cream cheese frosting](#)--just add colorful rainbow sprinkles when mixing.
- The yellow grass is made by mixing yellow food coloring with coconut.
- The eggs are robin egg malt balls.
- The little white bunnies holding a jelly bean are made by [Wilton](#). I purchased these at Jo-Ann Fabrics. They are edible.

For the chocolate cupcakes in the lower picture, I used one of the best chocolate cake recipes I've tried, which is simple enough for anyone to use. It's from Hershey's (hint: you can find it on their cocoa containers). Try mixing it up a bit and throw some variety into the recipe. My favorite addition to a chocolate cake recipe is to add sugar-free chocolate or hazelnut syrup (I use Torani or DaVinci brands).

Avoid anything with too much filling - preferably just a light cake kids of all ages may enjoy.

The topping? Colored coconut and chocolate eggs. For the coconut, the easiest method I've found is to place the coconut in a small plastic bag and add the food coloring. Shake it up until the coconut is completely coated. Allow it to dry completely on a paper towel, then sprinkle over each cupcake - so simple and such a crowd-pleaser!

