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Home cooking: Maple bacon cupcakes

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4:06 p.m. EDT, July 2, 2013

Joshua Purdham, 24, of Hagerstown, likes to bake.

"I do a lot of cakes and cookies and cupcakes for friends or whoever needs it," he said. "Birthday parties and things like that."

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When he was younger, he got together with a friend every week to come up with a new recipe they could post in a

blog. They did this for years.

Purdham's interest in baking led him to the Pennsylvania School of Culinary Arts in Lancaster, Pa., where he completed the one-year pastry arts program.

In April, Purdham entered The Herald-Mail's 2013 Cupcake Contest with this maple-bacon cupcake recipe. He said he developed his recipe from one in a Culinary Institute of America cookbook.

"I was going through my textbooks for a shortbread-y, cakey kind of thing," he said. "I thought it would be a mock pancake. I played around with the flavoring to get a buttery kind of taste. And changed the bake times until I got it where I wanted it."

Purdham's recipe advanced to the final round of The Herald-Mail's contest but was not selected among the top finalists.

— Chris Copley, Lifestyle assistant editor

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Maple bacon cupcakes

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1 stick plus 1 tablespoon butter, melted
2 teaspoons butter flavoring
1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
7 large eggs
7 yolks from large eggs
2 cups granulated sugar
3 cups flour

For icing:

1/2 cup water
1 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
4 teaspoons maple flavoring
1 1/2 cups shortening
6 cups confectioners' sugar

For decoration:

4 or 5 slices hickory-smoked bacon, fried and crumbled
1/4 cup real maple syrup

To make the cake, blend butter, butter flavor and 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla.

In separate bowl, combine eggs, egg yolks and sugar in mixer bowl set over a pan of barely simmering water. Whisk constantly until sugar dissolves and mixture reaches 110 degrees.

Heat oven to 350 degrees.

Transfer to mixing bowl and whip on high with whip attachment until foam reaches maximum volume. Reduce speed to medium. Mix for 15 minutes to stabilize mixture.

Fold in flour.

Temper butter mixture with small portion of the whipped batter, then fold into batter.

Fill cupcake pans with paper liners. Fill each with 1/4 cup batter.

Bake cupcakes for 18 to 22 minutes until toothpick inserted in cake comes out clean. Let cupcakes cool in pan.

To make icing, combine water, salt, 2 teaspoons vanilla flavoring and maple flavoring in a small bowl. Mix until salt is dissolved.

Place flavor mixture and shortening in mixer bowl and beat on low speed. Add confectioners' sugar slowly in parts while mixer is on low. Once all sugar is incorporated, beat on high to achieve desired consistency.

Ice cupcakes, then divide crumbled bacon on icing and drizzle with maple syrup.

Makes 2 to 2 1/2 dozen.

— Submitted by Joshua Purdham of Hagerstown; cake recipe adapted from "Baking and Pastry: Mastering the Art and Craft" by The Culinary Institute of America; icing recipe, original.



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