

French Cakes with Candy Cap Mushrooms



Madeleines are small cakes usually made for special occasions and a specific piece of equipment is needed to highlight them. These rich little pound cakes in the form of a shell were made with candy cap mushrooms (*Lactarius rubidus*). Madeleines are at their best when eaten immediately after removing from the pan. If you serve them plain and they get a little dry, dip them into your tea or coffee. Try smearing some berry yogurt or preserves on them. If there are leftovers, refrigerate, but warm them before serving.

Candy Caps are one of the most unique edible mushrooms around. They are uncharacteristically sweet and are often compared to maple syrup, especially after being dried. The ones that are picked in northern California seem to be more fragrant than the ones found in Oregon. They are valued for their highly aromatic qualities and are usually used as a flavoring.

Spray oil such as Pam; used to grease the Madeleine pan

3 extra-large eggs, at room temperature

2/3 cup sugar

1/4 pound (1 stick) unsalted butter; melted and cooled to room temperature

1 cup all-purpose flour

1/4 cup cornstarch

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

1/4 teaspoon kosher salt

3/4 to 1 teaspoon dried Candy Cap mushrooms; ground in a coffee grinder

2-3 tablespoons pecans, chopped

1 tablespoon maple syrup

Confectioner's sugar and cinnamon mixture; 1/8 cup sugar to 1/8 teaspoon ground cinnamon (optional)\

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Thoroughly grease the Madeleine pan with a spray such as Pam. Do not use a non-stick pan. Put the eggs and sugar in a mixing bowl. Using an electric mixer beat the eggs and sugar on medium speed until light yellow and fluffy, about 10 minutes. Add the melted butter and mix in.

In another bowl sift together the dry ingredients: flour, cornstarch, baking powder, and salt. Then stir into the batter. Using dried Candy Cap mushrooms grind the mushrooms into a powder with a coffee grinder. Add the ground candy caps to the dry ingredients. Return this dried ingredient mixture to a bowl and blend with an electric mixer for a couple of minutes. Combine the wet and dry ingredients. Add the chopped pecans and maple syrup and mix together.

With a soup spoon drop the batter into the pan, filling each shell in the Madeleine pan almost full. Bake for 15-17 minutes (depending on the oven) until they are golden and spring back when pressed. Tap the Madeleines out onto a baking pan lined with parchment paper and allow to cool.

Dust with confectioners' sugar blended with cinnamon, if desired, and/or have some berry yogurt or preserves available to smear on them when served. Another great topping is to combine vanilla Greek yogurt with blackberry preserves. Dickinson's pure seedless preserves were used. For every cup of yogurt add 3 tablespoons preserves.

Yield: 20-22 cakes