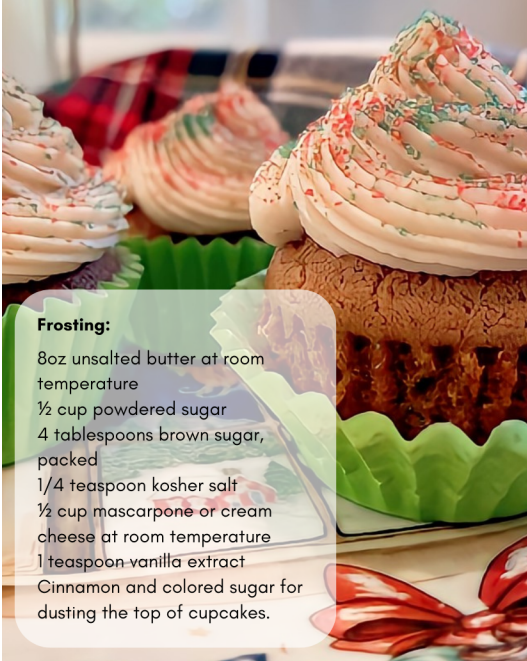


## Gingerbread Cupcakes with Brown Sugar and Mascarpone Frosting



### Frosting:

8oz unsalted butter at room temperature  
½ cup powdered sugar  
4 tablespoons brown sugar, packed  
¼ teaspoon kosher salt  
½ cup mascarpone or cream cheese at room temperature  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
Cinnamon and colored sugar for dusting the top of cupcakes.

### Cupcakes:

1 ½ cups all-purpose flour	½ cup lard at room temperature
¼ teaspoon baking soda	½ cup molasses
¾ teaspoon baking powder	½ cup brown sugar
¼ teaspoon kosher salt	2 tablespoons maple syrup
1 ½ teaspoons ground ginger	¼ cup sour cream
1 ½ teaspoons ground cinnamon	1/3 cup whole milk
¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg	2 large eggs
¼ teaspoon ground allspice	1 teaspoon vanilla extract
¼ teaspoon ground clove	

### Instructions:

#### For cupcakes:

1. In a bowl, cream together lard and brown sugar using an electric mixer.
2. Once combined, add the eggs and mix well.
3. Add maple syrup, sour cream, milk, and vanilla. Mix until smooth.
4. In a separate bowl, combine all dry ingredients. Gradually add the dry ingredients (1/3 at a time) to the wet mixture, mixing until smooth. Be careful not to over-mix.
5. Fill each cupcake wrapper a little over half full.
6. Bake in a convection oven at 350°F for about 16-18 minutes, or until a toothpick comes out clean when inserted into the center of the cupcake. Allow to cool completely (do not refrigerate).

#### For frosting:

1. Begin by dicing room-temperature butter. Add brown sugar and mix until smooth with an electric mixer for about 3-4 minutes.
2. Next, add powdered sugar and mix on low speed until sugar is fully incorporated. Increase the speed and whip until smooth and fluffy.
3. Add vanilla extract and mascarpone, mixing on medium speed for an additional 2 minutes. Avoid overmixing, as the mascarpone can separate. It also mixes in better if the mascarpone or cream cheese is at room temperature.
4. Transfer the frosting into a piping bag to top the cupcakes. If you don't have a piping bag, spread on a generous amount with a rubber or offset spatula.
5. Garnish each cupcake with a dusting of cinnamon and red and green sugar crystals.

