



# Inspired by Oprah's

Everyone knows Oprah never settles for second best—especially when it comes to cupcakes! So we went straight to the source—Sam Godfrey, baker of the best cupcakes Oprah's ever tasted—for his clever cupcake tricks. And while he wouldn't divulge his secret family recipes, our test kitchen was so inspired by his tender, delightful little cakes, we developed our own versions so scrumptious they might fool even Oprah!

**W**ant to make this your most *delicious* Christmas ever? Then take a tip from Oprah! "I win the record for most cupcakes given in a single year," the superstar recently revealed. "They're a perfect gift to give." Especially when you give *the* perfect cupcake. Which is why Oprah relies on pastry chef Sam Godfrey, owner of Perfect Endings in Napa Valley, CA. Sam's little frosted masterpieces became world famous after Oprah put 'em on her "Favorite Things" list in 2007. Since then, "she has even put our cupcakes on her Favorite Things list of *all time*," Sam beams.

What makes his creations so heavenly? He says the credit goes to his guardian angel. "I grew up in a rough neighborhood, and my grandmother would bake with me to keep me inside and safe," he recalls. "These are her recipes. And they've been a blessing to me my whole life."

Sam keeps his grandma's actual recipe cards top secret, but we convinced him to share his baking tips (*below*).

Though Oprah thinks all Perfect Endings cupcakes are divine, "my favorite is coconut," she says.

Put 'em to work when making our Sam-inspired recipes, and when it comes to the finishing touches, go ahead and keep it simple like he does, or follow our festive frosting ideas—either way, your holiday treats will hit a super-sweet note!



## Delicious tricks from Oprah's favorite cupcake baker!



### 1 Opt for smart splurges.

Don't bother buying special cake flour—all-purpose works just as well, says Sam. But high-quality butter, fancy vanilla (like Nielsen Massey) and gourmet cocoa (like Valrhona) will make a difference. "They cost a little more, but they're worth it!"

### 2 Melt butter *naturally*.

"If you soften butter in the microwave and some of it melts, it will change the texture of your cupcake for the worse," he warns.



### 3 Measure flour with a light hand.

For a fluffy cupcake, lightly spoon flour into measuring cups, then level off before adding to your batter.

