Salted Caramel Chocolate Cupcakes

For the cupcakes:

½ cup plus 1 tablespoon Dutch-process cocoa powder

½ cup plus 1 tablespoon hot water

2¼ cups all-purpose flour

¾ tsp. baking soda

¾ tsp. baking powder

½ tsp. salt

2 sticks plus 1 tablespoon unsalted butter, at room temperature

1 2/3 cups sugar

3 large eggs, at room temperature

1 tbsp. vanilla extract

¾ cup sour cream

For the filling:

2½ cups sugar

2/3 cup water

1 tbsp. light corn syrup

¾ cup heavy cream, warmed

2¼ tsp. sea salt

Salted Caramel Buttercream

To make the cupcakes, preheat the oven to 350˚ F. Line cupcake pans with paper liners. In a small bowl, combine the cocoa powder and hot water and whisk until smooth.

In another medium bowl combine the flour, baking soda, baking powder, and salt, and whisk to blend.

Combine the butter and sugar in a medium saucepan set over medium heat. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the mixture is smooth and the butter is completely melted.

Transfer the mixture to the bowl of an electric mixer and beat on medium-low speed until the mixture is cool, about 4-5 minutes. Add the eggs one at a time.

Blend in the vanilla and then the cocoa mixture until smooth.

With the mixer on low speed, add the flour mixture in three additions alternating with the sour cream.

Divide the batter evenly between the prepared liners. Bake until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, about 18-20 minutes, rotating the pans halfway through baking.

To make the filling, combine the sugar, water, and corn syrup in a medium heavy-bottomed saucepan over medium-high heat. Clip a candy thermometer to the side of the pan. Heat, stirring frequently, until the sugar has melted into a syrup. Stop stirring and gently swirl the pan, using a pastry brush dipped in water to wipe down any bits of sugar stuck to the sides of the pan. Continue to boil, swirling occasionally, until the mixture is a deep amber color (but not burned!) and it registers 340˚ F on the thermometer.

Very slowly pour in the cream in a slow, steady stream down the inside edge of the pan, stirring constantly until smooth. Remove from the heat and stir in the salt.

Cut a hole in each cupcake.

Fill with caramel sauce.

Top with caramel buttercream.

Decorate with a chocolate dipped - salted caramel.