



Have You Heard?

By Doris Thomas
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Home Economist

Bran Muffins For Breakfast

When you pass through your favorite supermarket bakery do you gravitate to the bran muffins in an attempt to satisfy your urge for sweets as a healthy alternative

to doughnuts? Is this really a good shopping strategy? The answer is maybe yes, maybe no. This past spring the Washington Post tested the image of bran muffins against nutritional reality by sending sam-

Food	Calories	% Calories From Fat
English Muffin	140	6
Two slices whole-wheat toast, unbuttered	140	13
Bagel, plain	200	9
Danish pastry (plain)	235	49
Glazed doughnut	235	50
Croissant	235	46
Cheesecake	280	58
Bran muffin, average size	294	21

ples of local bran muffins to an independent food laboratory for analyses. The analyses showed that bran muffins are better for you than doughnuts, croissants or pastries, but their size is a nutritional drawback.

Compare the calories from fat for these breakfast treats. The cheesecake is thrown in for the sake of comparison.

Although the bran muffin is highest in total calories of the foods shown, it actually has the fewest calories per ounce of any food listed. In terms of calories per ounce it is closest to breads such as bagels, whole-wheat toast and English muffins. So bran muffin batter is not high in calories - its calorie wallop is a function of the cup size of the muffin tin.

Bran muffins are not a high-fat food. A modest 21 percent of their

calories comes from fat, less than the 30 percent recommended by the American Heart Association. They are definitely a superior choice over croissants, Danish pastry, glazed doughnuts and cheesecake if you want to lower your fat intake. However, they are not as low as English muffins, plain bagels or two slices of toast that are unbuttered. If you slather cream cheese or butter on these foods, then a plain bran muffin begins to look like a low-fat alternative.

Bran muffins do contain a substantial amount of fiber - about 6 grams per muffin. The National Cancer Institute considers a food with 4 or more grams of fiber per serving a "rich" source. The muffin provides this amount of fiber because it is so big. You can get the same amount of fiber from

foods that are lower in calories and that cost less. For example: four slices of unbuttered whole-wheat toast provide 8 grams of fiber for 280 calories and costs about 18 cents; a bowl of Fiber-One* contains 13 grams of fiber, 100 calories (with one-half cup of skim milk) and costs about 21 cents.

When selecting bran muffins read the label carefully to see that the muffin is made with an unsaturated vegetable oil and not palm or coconut oil. Comparison shop for muffin size. If you have will power, eat only one-half the muffin to reduce the calories and still enjoy the taste. Sliced fruit, half a bran muffin and a glass of milk still make a good breakfast.

*Where trade names are used, no discrimination is intended, and

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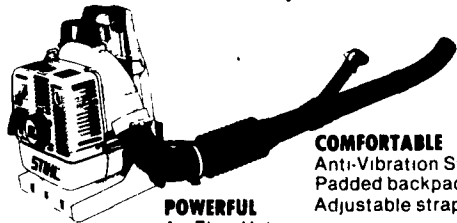
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