

Home on the Range

TASTE-TEMPPTING EYE-OPENERS!

Sunrise pours over the horizon, warming the crisp morning air. Coffee brews loudly in the kitchen as the sweet scent of spices gently flow through the house. Once again, this simple home is bursting at the seams with overnight guests. Tired eyes find their way to the dining room table eagerly awaiting the source of their aromatic

wakeup call. Daybreak spurs a myriad of wacky discussions, and soon laughter echoes through the house with a familiar sound.

Though breakfast can be in many forms, at this time of year when schedules are busy, simple is best. A variety of muffins and quick breads served with juice and coffee are a welcome eye-opener for everyone, and easy on the cook as well. A sweet batter serves as a base to many wonderfully taste-tempting creations. Loaded with fruits, veggies, nuts, and even cheese, Zucchini Pineapple Muffins and Apple Streusel Bread are unique taste sensations. Sunrise Surprise Muffins are chock-full of apples, carrots, coconut, raisins, and walnuts for a delicious, yet nutritious start to the day. A splendid citrus flavor combined with cranberries and pecans make the timely Season's Best Muffins a scrumptious choice. Snowy Pear Muffins are a delicate blend of pear and almond — sure to be a hit! Try all of the recipes to find your favorites!

In addition to being truly delectable, these muffin and quick bread recipes also offer "do ahead magic." They can be prepared the day before and heated in the microwave just before serving. Or if you want your guests to think you've been up since dawn, prepare most of the ingredients the night before and just mix up the batter in the morning. The muffins need only about 20 minutes to cook and they are positively divine fresh from the oven. Either way, these unique varieties will be a welcome change for everyone.



SEASON'S BEST MUFFINS

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| 1 cup slightly frozen cranberries | 1/3 cup vegetable oil |
| 2 tablespoons sugar | 1 egg |
| 2 cups all-purpose flour | 1 teaspoon grated orange peel |
| 1/2 cup sugar | 1/3 cup shredded pecans |
| 3 teaspoons baking powder | 2 tablespoons margarine, melted |
| 1/2 teaspoon salt | 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon |
| 1/2 cup milk | 1/4 cup sugar |
| 1/2 cup orange juice | |

Preheat oven to 400°. Slice slightly frozen cranberries into a small mixing bowl. Stir in sugar and set aside. In large mixing bowl, combine flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt. Fit Salad Shooter Mixer Too with beaters. In separate bowl, beat milk, orange juice, oil, egg, and orange peel. Add to flour mixture and beat only until all ingredients are moistened. Shred pecans. Fold cranberry mixture and pecans into batter. Fill greased (bottom only) or paper baking cup lined muffin pan 3/4 full. Bake for 18 to 20 minutes. Remove from pan immediately. Brush muffin tops with melted margarine, then dip in cinnamon and sugar mixture.

APPLE STREUSEL BREAD

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| 1 1/2 cups shredded apples | 1/2 teaspoon salt |
| 2/3 cup shredded cheddar cheese | 1 teaspoon cinnamon |
| 1/2 cup shredded walnuts | 1/3 cup honey |
| 2 cups all-purpose flour | 1/3 cup vegetable oil |
| 1/2 teaspoon baking soda | 2 eggs |
| 1 teaspoon baking powder | 1/3 cup applesauce |

STREUSEL TOPPING

- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon shredded walnuts
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon

Preheat oven to 350°. Shred apples, cheddar cheese, and walnuts for muffins and streusel topping. Set aside. In large mixing bowl, combine flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt, and cinnamon. Stir in apples, cheddar cheese, and 1/2 cup shredded walnuts. In separate bowl, beat honey, vegetable oil, eggs, and applesauce. Add to flour mixture and beat just until all ingredients are moistened. Fill greased 8 1/2" x 4 1/2" x 2 1/2" bread pan. Combine streusel topping ingredients. Sprinkle streusel topping on batter. Bake for 50 to 60 minutes. Allow loaf to cool for 10 minutes in pan, then loosen sides of loaf and remove from pan. Let loaf cool completely before slicing.

MUFFIN VARIATION Preheat oven to 400° and fill greased (bottom only) or paper baking cup lined muffin pan 3/4 full. Combine streusel topping ingredients. Sprinkle streusel topping on batter. Bake for 20 minutes.

SUNRISE SURPRISE MUFFINS

- 2 cups shredded carrots
- 1 medium apple, shredded
- 1/2 cup shredded walnuts
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 1/4 cups sugar
- 2 1/2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/2 cup coconut
- 1/2 cup golden raisins
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1/3 cup buttermilk
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 350°. Shred carrots, apple, and walnuts. Set aside. In large mixing bowl, combine flour, sugar, soda, salt, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Stir carrots, apples, walnuts, coconut, and raisins into flour mixture. In separate bowl, beat eggs, oil, buttermilk, and vanilla. Add to flour mixture and beat only until all ingredients are moistened. Fill greased (bottom only) or paper baking cup lined muffin pan 3/4 full. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes. If paper baking cups are not used, allow muffins to remain in pan for 5 minutes before removing. Otherwise, remove muffins from pan immediately.

SNOWY PEAR MUFFINS

- 2 cups shredded, firm pears
- 1/2 cup shredded almonds, divided
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 2 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 egg
- 1/3 cup oil
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1/4 teaspoon almond extract
- 2 tablespoons sugar

Preheat oven to 400°. Shred pears and almonds in small mixing bowl. Set aside. In large mixing bowl, combine flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt. Measure shredded pears and 1/3 cup almonds. Stir into dry ingredients. Set aside remaining almonds. In separate bowl, beat egg, oil, milk, and almond extract. Combine with flour mixture and beat only until all ingredients are moistened. Fill greased (bottom only) or paper baking cup lined muffin pan 2/3 full. Combine remaining almonds with 2 tablespoons sugar. Top muffin batter with almond/sugar mixture. Bake for 18 to 20 minutes. Remove from pan immediately.

ZUCCHINI PINEAPPLE MUFFINS

- 1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup quick cooking oats
- 3/4 cup brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ginger
- 1 cup shredded zucchini
- 1 cup shredded carrots
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 1 (8-ounce) can crushed pineapple, drained
- 1/2 cup, drained
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil

Preheat oven to 400°. In large mixing bowl, combine flour, oats, sugar, baking powder, soda, salt, and ginger. Shred zucchini and carrots. Stir zucchini, carrots, raisins, and pineapple into flour mixture. In separate bowl, beat eggs and oil. Add to flour mixture and beat only until all ingredients are moistened. Fill greased (bottom only) or paper baking cup lined muffin pan 3/4 full. Bake for 18 to 20 minutes. Remove muffins from pan immediately.

HELPFUL HINTS

Pick a size: Jumbo, regular, or mini! Make varied sizes for different appetites. Mini muffins are great for kids. There's usually less waste and the mess is kept to a minimum. Jumbo muffins are what most people will eat anyway, so it's just fewer muffins to bake. Be aware, though, that cooking times will need to be adjusted accordingly.

Bottoms up: If you choose to grease the pan instead of using muffin liners, grease only the bottoms. The muffins come out beautifully and a little less fat is always appreciated.

Cheat a little: Bake muffins the day before and reheat 4 muffins at a time in the microwave for about 1 minute. They'll come out steaming hot and will emit the aroma of fresh baked muffins.

Seal and store: Muffins can be kept at room temperature in a resealable plastic bag for up to 3 days. They can also be frozen in a freezer bag for up to 3 months.

Gift travel: As your guests depart, send along a care package of muffins for the long ride home.