

Home on the Range



Clockwise from top left: Nutter 'Nana Muffins and Confetti Bites

Makin' Muffins

Makin' muffins is simple even when you're in a hurry.

You can mix up a batch, and while they're baking, get dressed.

Although great-tasting muffins are sold in many specialty shops and supermarkets, homemade muffins give you more control over the ingredients. This is especially important if you have concerns about sugar and fat content. Many purchased muffins have as much fat or more than a cupcake. But if you make your own, you can substitute applesauce or mashed banana for oil or butter, and cut the sugar significantly. On the other hand, some people prefer the taste and texture achieved by using butter instead of oil.

Regardless, one of the main criteria in making perfect muffins is not to overmix the ingredients or they'll be tough. Generally it takes only one minute to combine the ingredients.

After baking, some muffins are a bit fragile and need to cool a few minutes in the muffin tin before removal.

Start with these favorites from our readers and then experiment. Throw in a handful of raisins or almonds, if that's what you like. Or eliminate the nuts if you don't have them on hand.

BUTTERNUT SQUASH MUFFINS

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
 - 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
 - 1 tablespoon baking powder
 - 1 teaspoon salt
- Blend together ingredients in large bowl. In medium bowl, blend the following until smooth:
- 1 large egg
 - 1 cup milk
 - 1/4 cup melted butter
 - 2/3 cup mashed butternut squash

Combine the two mixtures, blending just until moistened. Do not overbeat!

Spoon into paper-lined muffin tins. Bake 15-20 minutes at 400 degrees.

Topping for Muffins Dutchy Crust

- 1/4 cup softened butter
- 1/4 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1/4 cup quick oats
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon

Mix together all ingredients until crumbly. Sprinkle on muffins and bake.

Tip: Set a pan of hot water in oven when you bake the muffins to make them more moist. Also, overbeating can cause muffins to be dry. Beat only until muffins are moistened.

Nancy Kramer
Newmanstown

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BANANA-NUT MUFFINS

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup milk
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 cup water
- 1/3 cup vegetable oil
- 1/4 cup mashed banana
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Grease 12-cup muffin pan. Sift flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt into medium bowl; make a well in center.

Mix milk, egg, water, oil, banana, and walnuts in a small bowl. Pour mixture into well.

Mix batter just until moistened; do not overmix.

Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups. Bake until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean or until muffins are golden brown, about 15 minutes.

Makes 12 muffins.

Variation: Blueberries or raisins may be substituted for mashed banana.

Amanda Grossman
Chester Co. Dairy Princess

BLUEBERRY CHEESE MUFFINS

- 1 1/2 cups whole wheat flour
- 1 1/2 cups white flour
- 1 tablespoons baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 3 eggs
- 1 cup milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 6 tablespoons butter, softened
- 2 cups frozen blueberries
- 1 cup grated mozzarella, cheddar, cream cheese or your favorite cheese

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Beat butter until creamy. Beat in sugar until light and fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time. Stir in baking powder and salt. Mash half of the blueberries and stir them in along with the grated cheese. Stir in whole wheat flour and half the milk. Stir in white flour and remaining milk. Stir in remaining blueberries. The batter will be very moist, like pancake batter. Pour into muffin tins and bake 30-40 minutes for six large muffins or about 20 minutes for 18 regular-size muffins.

OATMEAL ORANGE MUFFINS

- 1 cup oats cooked in 1/2 cup orange juice and 1/2 cup boiling water for 15 minutes.
- 1/2 cup butter
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 cup raisins
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Cream together butter and sugar. Beat in eggs and stir in oat mixture. Stir in raisins.

Add flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt and vanilla.

Stir until moistened. Pour into well-greased muffin cups.

Bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes.

Elisa Ranck
Lancaster Co. Dairy Princess

HONEY MAKE MY MORNING MUFFINS

- 1/2 cup milk
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1 egg, beaten
- 2 1/2 cups buttermilk baking mix or biscuit mix

In a medium bowl, combine milk, honey, and beaten egg; mix well. Add baking mix and stir until moistened. Spoon into greased muffin tins. Bake at 400 degrees for 18-20 minutes.

Renee Blatt
PA Honey Queen

Featured Recipe

By combining the natural sweetness of prunes with crunchy peanuts or peanut butter, you can create some fun after-school munchies to curb kids' hunger and keep them healthy too.

Here is an easy recipe that takes only moments to prepare and will have your whole family asking for more.

Nutter 'Nana Muffins

- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup creamy peanut butter
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 cup mashed ripe bananas (about 2 medium)
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup (6 ounces) coarsely chopped pitted prunes
- 3 tablespoons chopped unsalted dry roasted peanuts

Heat oven to 350°F. Line 12 medium muffin cups with paper baking cups or spray bottoms only with no-stick cooking spray. In mixer bowl, beat together sugar, peanut butter and oil until creamy. Add bananas, egg and lemon juice; beat until blended. Combine flour, baking powder and salt; add to banana mixture, stirring until just moistened. (Do not overmix.) Gently stir in prunes; fill muffin cups three-fourths full. Sprinkle tops with peanuts; bake 18 to 22 minutes or until wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool in pan 5 minutes; remove from pan. Serve warm or cool completely on wire rack.

Makes 1 dozen

Nutrition Information Per Serving (1 muffin): 270 calories; 9 g fat; 0 mg cholesterol; 230 mg sodium; 42 g carbohydrate; 2 g fiber; 5 g protein; 31% calories from fat

Note:

To make mini-muffins, line 36 small (1 3/4-inch) muffin cups with paper baking cups or spray bottoms with no-stick cooking spray. Bake 12 to 14 minutes or until wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. (Makes 3 dozen mini-muffins.)

For additional recipes with prunes, send a business size self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Get into the Goodness-FAMF, 5990 Stoneridge Drive, Suite 101, Pleasanton, CA 94588. You can also log on to www.prunes.org for other recipe ideas.

For more healthy recipe ideas, send a business size self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Peanut Advisory Board—healthy recipes, P.O. Box 7528, Tifton, GA 31793. Or visit us on the Web at www.peanutbutterlovers.com.

Recipe Topics

If you have recipes for the topics listed below, please share them with us. We welcome your recipes, but ask that you include accurate measurements, a complete list of ingredients and clear instructions with each recipe you submit. Send your recipes to Lou Ann Good, Lancaster Farming, P.O. Box 609, Ephrata, PA 17522. Recipes should reach our office one week before publishing date listed below.

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|----------|---------------------------------|
| February | 12 - Valentine Sweets |
| | 19 - Heart-Healthy Eats |
| | 26 - Potatoes for All Occasions |
| March | 4 - Nutrition Month |

