

# Food & Drink

## Try fresh, easy muffins any morning



**TASTY MUFFINS:** You can enjoy fresh, healthy muffins even on the busiest mornings with these easy recipes you can prepare the day before baking.

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Mmmmm ... mmm  
Mmmmm, muffins!

Muffins served hot, straight from the oven, are perfection. They are one of the easiest, tastiest treats you can make for you and your family.

Muffins are perfect for breakfast, lunch and dinner — in fact, they can be enjoyed at any time of the day or night.

They are ideal to snack on at home, school or at work and can be easily transported on family hikes, picnics or long car rides.

Muffins can be baked in time for breakfast any day of the week by simply preparing your ingredients the night before.

Measure your dry ingredients into a bowl and lightly stir.

Measure the wet ingredients together into a bowl and place in refrigerator.

In the morning, mix the two bowls together and bake according to the recipe instructions.

You'll have a delicious, freshly baked muffin to enjoy with your morning

cup of coffee — what a great way to start your day!

Try one of the recipes below some time — all are easy to make, wonderful to freeze and sure to win great reviews among family, friends and co-workers.

### MUFFIN TIPS AND VARIATIONS

- Most muffin recipes follow the basic proportion of two parts of flour to one of liquid.

- Vary your favourite muffin recipe by substituting buttermilk for milk; honey, brown sugar, molasses, or maple syrup for the sugar.

- Instead of, or along with, raisins, try adding other small or coarsely-chopped dried or candied fruits such as apricots, apples, cherries, papaya, or pineapple, fresh or frozen blueberries or raspberries; coarsely-chopped nuts of your choice; a few tablespoons of wheat germ; crumbled crisp bacon; or even chocolate chips.

- Never over stir a muffin batter, this over develops

the gluten in the flour, resulting in tough muffins. Stir just long enough to make a slightly lumpy batter.

- If you want a more festive presentation, as well as easier cleanup, line your muffin cups with paper or foil muffin liners.

- To test muffins for doneness, insert a toothpick into the centre of one. It should come out clean.

## It's a perfect time of year to enjoy squash

Food for Thought

Lisa Cartwright



There was frost on the ground when we woke up Sunday morning.

On Saturday I saw a group of Canada Geese in their beautiful V-formation, heading to warmer climates.

And all weekend I was wearing wool sweaters and drinking hot chocolate.

It's fall and I am sure winter isn't too far away.

The change in season means that summer produce is slowly disappearing from grocery store shelves and winter produce is more prevalent — including winter squash.

While there are about nine different varieties of winter squash on the Ontario market, the main types are Butternut, Acorn or Pepper, Turban, Hubbard (blue, golden and green), Buttercup and Delicata.

When purchasing the vegetable, which is an excellent source of beta carotene, potassium and a source of vitamin C and folacin, people need to look for a dry, uniformly-hard surface that is free of soft spots and bruises.

According to a Foodland Ontario Fact Sheet, despite the tough exterior, the vegetable needs careful handling.

The season for winter squash starts in September and goes to November, but can be purchased to mid-March because of the modern storage system for produce.

And squash, like pumpkins and gourds, have a variety of usages.

They can be creamed into vegetable soups, pureed into a squash pie or cut into pieces and mashed. It can also be cooked in its shell and served with brown sugar or maple syrup.

### RECIPES

#### MORNING GLORY MUFFINS

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup whole wheat flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp ginger
- 1/4 tsp allspice
- 3/4 cup brown sugar
- 1 egg, large
- 1/2 cup buttermilk (or plain yogurt)
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 3/4 cup crushed pineapple, drained
- 3/4 cup carrots, grated
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 1/2 cup lightly-toasted walnuts or pecans

Pre-heat oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit. Grease 12 muffin cups. In a large bowl combine flour, baking powder, soda, salt, spices and sugar. Stir dry ingredients together with a fork.

In a medium bowl, whisk egg with buttermilk, oil and vanilla. Stir in pineapple. Pour into flour mixture and stir until just combined. Stir in carrots, raisins and nuts until evenly mixed.

Spoon batter into muffin cups. Bake in centre of oven until golden and cake tester comes out clean, about 15 to 17 minutes. Cool muffins in cups for 5 minutes, then remove to cooling rack. Store in sealed bag or container.

Yield: 1 dozen large muffins.

#### REFRIGERATOR BRAN MUFFINS

- 2 1/2 cups sugar, granulated
- 4 eggs, large
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 1 tbsps salt
- 8 tsp baking soda
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 1/2 cups whole wheat flour
- 4 cups buttermilk
- 2 cups All Bran or other bran bud cereal
- 3 cups bran flakes
- 2 cups raisins (or dates)

Beat sugar, eggs, oil and salt in a very large bowl (or plastic pail) until thick and creamy. Sift baking soda and flour into a separate bowl.

Add half each of buttermilk, flour mixture, cereals and raisins to sugar/egg mixture in plastic pail. Stir to combine.

Add remaining halves of ingredients. Stir until just combined. Don't over mix batter.

For best results, refrigerate one to two days before baking.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit. Lightly butter muffin tins or line with baking cups. Spoon in batter.

Bake 20-25 minutes or until toothpick inserted comes out clean.

Yield: 4 dozen large muffins.

Note: batter will keep in fridge four to five weeks, tightly covered.

#### ORANGE DATE MUFFINS

- 1/2 cup pitted dates, chopped
- 1 orange, unpeeled
- 1/2 cup butter, cold (cut in pieces)
- 3/4 cup sugar, granulated
- 1/2 cup orange juice
- 1 egg
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup whole wheat flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp salt

Chop dates in food processor fitted with steel blade. Remove from bowl. Wash orange and cut into four sections.

Place orange in food processor and process until finely chopped.

Add dates, orange juice, egg and butter to work bowl and process until mixed (approx. 5 seconds).

Stir together flours, sugars, baking powder, baking soda and salt; add to date mixture and process until moistened but not over-mixed.

Spoon batter into large greased muffin cups, filling 3/4 full.

Bake in 400 degree Fahrenheit oven for 12 to 20 minutes or until tops are firm to the touch.

Yield: 12 muffins.