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Muffins

Makes 12 large muffins

For years, I looked for a basic muffin recipe that achieved the shape I wanted. So often, homemade muffins are compact rounds, tight and withholding when compared to the sprawling tops of good diner muffins. In the end, the answer was simply to increase the amount of batter. Because of the added batter, these muffins require more time in the oven than what you might be used to, and there's a slight risk of the batter migrating all the way across the tin and actually dripping off. If that starts to happen or if you're worried about it, just put a big baking sheet on the lowest oven rack. Or if your tin is a bit smaller than average and you feel like you have far too much batter, start a second tin and fill the empty cups halfway with water to help the adjacent muffins bake evenly.

8 tablespoons (1 stick/ 115 g) unsalted butter, melted, plus additional for greasing the tin
3 cups (360 g) all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon baking soda
1 tablespoon baking powder
¾ teaspoon kosher salt
2 large eggs
1 cup (200 g) sugar
1 cup (240 ml) whole milk
1 cup (225 g) plain whole milk yogurt (for homemade, see page 34/*not included*)
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
2½ cups berries or 2 cups other coarsely chopped fruit, fresh or thawed
Optional: ½ cup coarsely chopped or sliced nuts

1 Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease the cups and top of a standard 12-cup muffin tin. Alternately, you can use muffin liners, but still grease the top of the tin.

2 Whisk together the flour, baking soda, baking powder, and salt in a large mixing bowl. Set aside. In a medium bowl, lightly beat the eggs just enough to incorporate the yolk in the white. Add the sugar, butter, milk, yogurt, and vanilla to the eggs and whisk thoroughly to combine. Pour the egg mixture into the flour mixture. Use a wooden spoon to combine the two with a few swift strokes, making sure the dry ingredients are just barely incorporated into the wet.

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3 Add the fruit and again, with just a few strokes, fold it into the batter. Use a large spoon or an ice cream scoop to evenly divide the batter between the cups. The cups should be filled to overflowing. If you're using nuts, sprinkle them over each muffin. Bake until the muffins are golden and the center muffin is cooked all the way through, 40 to 50 minutes, rotating the pan halfway through baking. Allow to cool in the pan for about 20 minutes, then turn the pan upside down, gently coax the muffins out of their cups, and let them cool upside down until you're ready to eat them.

VARIATIONS

For a bit of whole grain, replace 1 cup all-purpose flour with 1 cup spelt or whole-wheat pastry flour.

- You can also make this recipe as a quick bread. Divide the batter between 2 standard loaf pans, and bake for 1 to 1¼ hours.
- For a streusel topping, combine ⅓ cup all-purpose flour, 1½ tablespoons cold, grated butter, and 1½ teaspoons cinnamon. Sprinkle over the muffins just before baking.

STORAGE NOTES

Muffin batter can be stored in a covered container in the refrigerator for up to 1 day. To freeze muffins, cool completely and freeze on a baking sheet. Transfer to freezer bags and freeze for up to 4 months. Thaw at room temperature and refresh in a 325°F oven for 10 to 15 minutes if needed.

SOME OF MY FAVORITE FLAVOR COMBINATIONS

Blueberry and Lemon Zest: 2½ cups blueberries + 1 teaspoon lemon zest

Pear Chocolate Hazelnut: 2 cups peeled and coarsely chopped Bosc pears + ¾ cup bittersweet chocolate chips + ¾ cup toasted, skinned, coarsely chopped hazelnuts

Raspberry Almond: 2½ cups raspberries + ½ teaspoon almond extract; scatter ½ cup sliced almonds over the muffins

Apple Pecan: 2 cups peeled and coarsely chopped apples + ¾ cup toasted, coarsely chopped pecans; top with streusel (see variation above)

Ginger Peach: 2 cups peeled and coarsely chopped peaches + 1 teaspoon ground ginger + 1 tablespoon coarsely chopped crystallized ginger + ½ teaspoon grated nutmeg

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Approach will be made to the Homebrew (Garden) Rules and I will discuss them with the Homebrew community. I will also be making a Raspberry Jam for the Raspberry Jam Festival in May. I will be making a Raspberry Jam for the Raspberry Jam Festival in May. I will be making a Raspberry Jam for the Raspberry Jam Festival in May.