

Black Cocoa Banana Muffins

Yield: 18 muffins (from www.chopchopmag.org)

Ingredients:

1 cup whole wheat flour
3/4 cups unsweetened cocoa powder
1 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
4 over-ripe bananas
1 cup sugar
1/2 cup canola oil
2 large eggs
2 teaspoons vanilla extract

Directions:

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Put the flour, cocoa powder, baking soda, and salt in a bowl and mix well with a whisk. Set aside.
- Put the bananas and sugar in a bowl and mash until the mixture is completely combined and there are no big chunks of banana. You can also use a blender, food processor or mixer. Add the oil, eggs and vanilla extract and mix well.
- Add the flour mixture to the wet ingredients a little at a time and mix by hand, with a spatula or large spoon until well combined.
- Line muffin tin with paper liners. Fill 2/3 full and bake for about 20 minutes.

Cream Cheese Frosting

(from www.chopchopmag.org)

Ingredients:

3/4 cups reduced fat cream cheese or Neufchatel cheese (at room temperature)
1/4 cup plain or Greek yogurt
2 tablespoons real maple syrup (optional)
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

Directions:

- Put everything in the bowl and mix until smooth.
- When cupcakes are completely cool, use the knife to swirl the frosting over the top. Serve right away, or cover and refrigerate up to 1 day

Cranberry Oatmeal Balls

(from www.foodhero.org)

Ingredients:

1 cup regular or quick-cooking **oats**
1/3 cup **almonds**, chopped
1/3 cup **peanut butter**
1/4 cup **honey**
1/3 cup dried **cranberries**
6 tablespoons unsalted butter (3/4 stick), cut into small pieces
1 cup buttermilk

Directions:

- In a medium bowl combine all ingredients until well mixed.
- Form into 18 balls about 1 inch wide. Place balls on a cookie sheet. Refrigerate for 30 minutes.

Whole Wheat Brownie Hearts Yield: 2 dozen brownies (adapted from www.kingarthurfLOUR.com)

Ingredients:

1 stick unsalted butter, softened
½ cup canola oil
2 cups light brown sugar
¾ cup Dutch-process cocoa
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
4 large eggs
1 ½ cups whole wheat Flour

Directions:

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a 9x13 pan with parchment paper. Use metal clips to secure parchment to the edge of the pan to prevent it from flopping on top of the batter as it bakes.
- In a saucepan set over low heat, melt the butter, then add the oil and sugar. Stir to combine.
- Return the mixture to the heat just till it's hot, but not bubbling. Don't worry if it separates; just stir it briefly to recombine a bit. Heating the mixture a second time will dissolve more of the sugar, which will yield a shiny top crust on your brownies.
- Transfer the mixture to a bowl, and stir in the cocoa, salt, baking powder, and vanilla.
- Add the eggs, stirring till smooth. Add the flour stirring till smooth. Spoon the batter into the prepared pan.
- Bake for 30 minutes, until a cake tester or sharp knife poked into the center reveals wet crumbs, but not raw batter. The brownies should feel set on the edges and in the center. Remove them from the oven, and cool completely on a rack. Use the parchment to lift the slab of brownies out of the pan.
- Cover and let sit overnight before cutting and serving; this gives the bran a chance to soften and become "invisible" in your mouth. Use cookie cutters to cut desired shapes.