

Recipe Packet: Baking Basics -- Quickbreads

Carrot Zucchini Muffins

Makes 1 dozen muffins

1 ½ cups whole wheat flour
1 ½ cups unbleached all purpose flour
1 ½ cups sugar
1 ½ teaspoons baking powder
¾ teaspoon kosher salt
¾ teaspoon baking soda
1 ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
¾ cup canola oil
3 eggs
1 cup of fresh unsweetened applesauce
1 tsp of vanilla
1 ½ cup grated zucchini, squeezed of extra water
1 ½ cup grated carrots
1 recipe Streusel topping, optional

Preheat oven to 350°F. Line a 12-cup muffin tin with paper cupcake liners, or spray evenly with nonstick spray. Set aside.

In a large bowl, combine the dry ingredients flours, sugar, baking powder, salt, baking soda, cinnamon and nutmeg. Stir together.

In another bowl, stir together the oil, eggs, applesauce and vanilla extract. Add the dry ingredients in three batches to the wet mixture and mix to reach a smooth consistency. Fold in grated carrots and zucchini.

Use a #12 portion scoop and divide the batter into the lined muffin cups. Top each muffin with a tablespoon of streusel. Bake in a pre-heated oven for 35 – 40 minutes, rotating half way.

Take it out and test with a toothpick to make sure inside of the muffins are done. Allow them to cool on wire racks.

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Streusel Topping

Makes 1 cup

- ¼ cup firmly packed golden brown sugar
- ¼ cup sliced almonds, unsalted
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, chilled and cut into ½" cubes
- ¼ cup old-fashioned oats (not instant, not quick-cook!)
- ¼ cup all purpose flour

Combine all of the ingredients into a food processor and let it run until moist clumps form. Chill in the fridge until ready to use.

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Cranberry-Orange Scones

Makes 24 scones

1 cup dried cranberries
¾ pound (3 sticks) cold unsalted butter, cut into small pieces
4 cups plus ¼ cup all-purpose flour
¼ cup sugar
2 tablespoons baking powder
2 teaspoons kosher salt
Zest of one orange
4 large eggs, lightly beaten
1 cup cold heavy cream
1 egg, beaten for egg wash
¼ cup turbinado sugar (or regular sugar) (optional)

Preheat the oven to 400 F.

Soak the cranberries hot water for 10 minutes, or at least as long as it takes to prepare the rest of the recipe. Cut up the butter sticks and keep in the freezer until you are ready to use them.

In a large bowl, mix the flour, sugar, baking powder, salt and orange zest with a wooden spoon. Add the butter. Break up the butter into the flour by rubbing the butter and flour together between your fingers. Do this very quickly and randomly. You should still have lumps of butter varying from small (pea-sized) to large (blueberry sized). Do not let the butter get soft. If it does, return the bowl to the fridge for a few minutes.

Combine the eggs and heavy cream together and add to the flour mixture. Stir gently with a wooden spoon until the dough forms a shaggy, lumpy mass. It's ok that it's not smooth or uniformly mixed in. It's ok to see random lumps of butter still not mixed in. Drain the cranberries and add them and the remaining cup of flour to the dough. Mix gently until the cranberries are distributed evenly in the dough.

Transfer the dough onto a well-floured surface and gently, with floured hands, pat it down into a rough rectangle shape about 1-inch thick. Use a spatula and pick up one end of the dough and fold it over in half. Pick up the entire dough piece and turn it 45-degrees. Flour your hands and pat it down into another rectangle. Pick up one end and fold it over, then pick up the entire dough piece and turn it 45-degrees again. Repeat this patting, folding, turning method 2 more times. Keep flour dusted underneath the dough as you turn it.

For the last pat-down, make sure the rectangle is about 10-12 inches long and 6 inches wide. Use a sharp knife and cut three strips of dough, each strip being about 2 inches wide and 10- 12 inches long. Cut each strip into 8 triangular pieces and lay each piece on a sheet pan lined with parchment paper or foil. You can fit 12 pieces on one tray, and prepare another tray for the remaining 12. Refrigerate the scones for about 30 minutes to firm up the butter.

Just before baking, lightly brush the egg wash over the tops of the scones and sprinkle the tops with the turbinado sugar.

Bake for 20-25 minutes, or until the tops are browned and the insides are fully baked. The scones will be firm to the touch. Transfer the pans to a wire rack to cool.

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Irish Soda Bread

Makes 1 loaf

3 cups all purpose flour
1 ½ teaspoons kosher salt
1 ½ teaspoons baking soda
1 ½ cups buttermilk
½ teaspoon olive oil

Preheat the oven to 425°F.

Reserve 1 teaspoon of the flour and combine the remaining flour with the salt and baking soda in a large mixing bowl. Make a well in the center of the flour and add the buttermilk. Mix gently and quickly with a wooden spatula until the mixture forms into a solid mass.

Turn the dough out onto a floured work surface and gently knead the dough into shape. Use a plastic scraper to lift up the dough. Fold it over with your hands and press down gently. Give the dough a quarter turn and lift and press again. Continue the lifting, folding and turning three more times or until the dough comes together. Use your hands to shape the dough into a round ball.

Oil an aluminum nonstick baking sheet with the canola oil and place the dough on the sheet. Sprinkle the reserved teaspoon of flour over the surface of the loaf and using a sharp knife, make two intersecting ¼"-deep cuts across the top of the surface of the loaf to create a cross.

Place a stainless steel bowl upside-down over the bread and bake for 30 minutes. Uncover and bake for another 30 minutes more.

Remove from oven and immediately remove from the baking sheet. Let the bread cool on a wire rack for at least 30 minutes before slicing and serving.

Cook's Note: *If you don't have any buttermilk on hand, and don't want to go to the store, simply make your own acidulated milk by following this ratio: Stir 1 tablespoon of lemon juice or cider vinegar to 1 cup of milk.*