![C:\Documents and Settings\mv12438\Local Settings\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\1TJQG8LW\MC900296276[1].wmf]()![C:\Documents and Settings\mv12438\Local Settings\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\JA358EA7\MC900282204[1].wmf]()Foods 9-10 (B)

**MUFFINS**

Muffins are one of the most common and simple quick breads, so named because they rise quickly due to the chemical leavening agent(s) used – baking powder and baking soda. While often thought of as being nutritious, muffins can be surprisingly high in fat and sugar (think of the giant cake-types). By choosing your recipe wisely, muffins can add variety, flavour and nutrition to your meals or snacks.

**The Muffin Method**

* ***Step 1*** Thoroughly combine all dry ingredients in a large bowl. Make a well in the centre.
* ***Step 2*** In a separate bowl, combine all liquid ingredients (include things such as mashed

banana, eggs and oil or melted fat).

* ***Step 3*** Add the liquids to the dry ingredients **ALL AT ONCE**. Mix/stir with a fork only until dry

ingredients are ***JUST*** moistened. The batter should be thick and lumpy. Do **NOT** over mix.

* ***Step 4*** Gently fold in additional ingredients if called for.

\***Note** – Dried fruit and nuts are tossed with dry ingredients before wet ingredients are added unless otherwise stated. The flour coating prevents them from sinking to the bottom of the muffin.

**Preparing The Pan**

* Grease pans with shortening, oil or cooking spray. Butter and margarine are not recommended as they will cause additional browning.
* Pans can also be lined with paper muffin cups – be sure to fully cool before removing liner or the muffin will stick to it.
* When greasing the pans, grease the top of the pan, too. It will make cleanup easier if the muffins rise up over the cup during baking or if you spill some of the batter while filling the pan/cups.
* Muffins will rise better and have a better shape if the pans are greased rather than using paper liners.

**Increasing the Nutritional Value**

* Try replacing some or all of the oil or fat with applesauce. In most recipes, you will not notice any change in quality.
* Use fresh or dried fruit, nuts, vegetables and cheese. Some recipes may even call for yogurt or tofu.
* Adding fruit to a recipe that doesn’t call for it may be risky as it may add or absorb more liquid. Try to find an existing recipe with the ingredients you want to use or if you have time and extra ingredients, experiment with your favourite.

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**Hints and Tips**

* Don’t over mix the batter – stir until ***JUST*** moistened. Over working will cause your final product to be tough and hard to chew due to the development of the gluten (protein). It will also cause peaks on the top and long narrow air holes (**TUNNELS**) inside.
* Use high quality non-stick or well-seasoned cast iron muffin pans to ensure even baking and ease in removal.
* For even browning, bake in the middle (centre) of the oven.
* Use fresh leavening agents. If baking powder or soda is over 6 months old you should replace it as it will start to lose its leavening power.
* Muffins freeze well so you can make them ahead for a quick breakfast or snack. Just thaw at room temperature.
* Fill muffin cups ⅔ full. More than that may cause them to overflow during baking or have odd shapes.
* Test the muffins 5 minutes before the end of the baking time. Check the colour and use the toothpick test (a toothpick inserted in the centre should come out clean).

**Qualities of a Good Muffin**

* Shiny and bumpy or pebbled top crust – not smooth.
* Round and symmetrical top shape – not peaked.
* Interior should be moist and tender with fine and uniform air-cell structure.
* Muffins should be light in texture with an appetizing aroma and colour.

**Troubleshooting**

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| --- | --- |
| **PROBLEM** | **POSSIBLE CAUSES** |
| Muffins are flat | * Oven temperature is too low
* Too much liquid
* Too much fat
 |
| Tough crumb; sometimes tunnelled | * Over-mixed
* Not enough liquid
* Too much flour
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| Muffins stick to pans or paper liners | * Not enough fat
* Pans not greased properly
* Not baked long enough
 |
| Poor volume | * Oven not hot enough
* Not enough leavener
* Muffins stood too long before baking
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