

Gluten-Free Apple Pear Muffins

Makes 12 Muffins

Gluten-free stuff usually tastes noticeably different than regular baked goods, but no one who has tasted these muffins has ever realized they were gluten-free until I told them. The first time you make them it may seem a little complicated, but once you get the hang of it, it only takes about 20 minutes from the time you start until the muffins are in the oven.

They have half of the butter found in most recipes. If you have to be very careful with your cholesterol, you can completely eliminate the butter and use a total of ½ cup of vegetable oil. You won't get any butter flavor, but with the fruit and spices, most people probably won't notice.

You can buy oat flour, but it's cheaper to put some regular oats into a small food processor and grind them for 20-30 seconds until the oats look like flour.

Mix the following in a bowl:

1 cup of ground oats (see above) or oat flour

1 1/3 cup (160 g) gluten-free flour blend (I use Namaste brand- purchased on Amazon)

1 ½ tsp baking soda

1 tsp baking powder

1+ tsp cinnamon

½ tsp nutmeg

½-1 tsp ground ginger or 1 tsp fresh grated ginger

¼ tsp ground cloves

In a large mixing bowl:

4 tbsp (1/2 stick) butter

¾-1 cup of sugar

¼ cup vegetable oil

2 large or extra large eggs

½ cup buttermilk

Homemade Apple-pear sauce (see below) or 1 ½ cups of sugar-free applesauce

1 large apple- whatever variety you like, although I'd avoid red delicious

1 large pear bosc or anjou

To make apple-pear sauce: Peel, core and roughly chop one apple and one pear. Put a medium size sauce pan over medium heat. Add a small amount of butter (< 1 tsp). Add the apple and pear. Add a small amount of brown sugar (1 tsp), 1 tsp cinnamon, grate in some fresh ginger or ½ tsp of ground ginger, and a little nutmeg. Stir until the fruit gets a little soft and the juices start to get thick. Take the pan off the heat and puree the fruit with an electric hand wand or in a small food processor. Set the mix aside to cool.

Place the butter and sugar in a bowl and mix with an electric mixer on medium until the butter starts to get pale. As the mixer is running, slowly pour in the oil (about 45 seconds) and continue to mix for another 2 minutes. The mixture should look a little fluffy. Add 1 egg at a time with the mixer on low-medium and combine for another minute. Now mix in the apple-pear puree or applesauce for about 10 seconds.

Gently mix in ½ of the dry ingredients (ground oats, flour, spices, etc.). Then mix in the buttermilk. Finally mix in the remaining dry ingredients.

Spray the muffin tin with a small amount of cooking spray or use cupcake holders. Spoon in the batter and bake at 350 degrees for about 25 minutes (your oven's cooking time may vary, so check after 20-22 minutes). A toothpick should come out clean when they're done.

You can also bake the batter in a loaf pan at 350 degrees for about 50 minutes if you prefer.