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Real Bran Muffins

Makes 18 to 20 muffins

Bran is the outer layer of grains (wheat or oats) that is removed during milling. It is a good source of carbohydrates, calcium, phosphorous, and fiber. You can make the batter for the muffins ahead and store it, covered, in the refrigerator for up to 1 week, and bake it when needed. These muffins stay moist for several days. Re-warm them in the microwave for 20 seconds.

1-3/4 cups wheat bran
1 cup boiling water
1-1/4 cups whole-wheat flour
1 cup all-purpose flour
2-1/2 teaspoons baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
3/4 cup honey
1/3 cup light molasses
6 tablespoons vegetable oil
1/4 cup packed brown sugar
2 teaspoons grated orange zest
2 large eggs
1 cup chopped walnuts
1 cup raisins (optional)

Preheat oven to 400°F. In a large bowl, stir together bran and boiling water and let stand for 15 minutes. In a medium bowl, combine flours, baking soda, and salt. Add honey, molasses, oil, brown sugar, and orange zest to bran mixture. Whisk in eggs. Stir in nuts and raisins, if desired. Add flour mixture and stir until dry ingredients are moistened (batter will be thick).

Spoon batter into paper-lined muffin tins, filling them three-fourths full. Bake until a toothpick comes out clean, 15 to 18 minutes. Let cool in muffin tins for 2 to 3 minutes before serving.