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Good Morning Muffins

Makes 12 muffins

“Morning glory” muffins used to be all the rage. They boasted a fiber-rich assortment of ingredients that was supposed to give you a good start to the day. I always liked the idea of them, but I was often disappointed at how heavy and greasy and overly sweet they could be. When I decided to put a morning glory-type muffin on the breakfast menu at Flour, I wanted it to be filled with wholesome, good-for-me ingredients but still be light, moist, and delicious. So, I adjusted the traditional roster of ingredients and then added a few of my own twists to create an updated version. It’s breakfast-on-the-go and the perfect start to a good morning, indeed.

1/2 cup (40 grams) wheat bran
1/2 cup (120 grams) hot water
1 small zucchini, grated (about 1-1/2 cups packed/200 grams)
1/2 cup (80 grams) raisins
1/2 cup (50 grams) pecan halves, roughly chopped, toasted
1/2 cup (60 grams) sweetened flaked coconut
1 apple, peeled, cored, and chopped (about 1 cup/120 grams)
2/3 cups (150 grams) packed light brown sugar
3 eggs
3/4 cup (150 grams) canola oil
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1-1/2 cups (210 grams) unbleached all-purpose flour
3/4 cup (75 grams) old-fashioned rolled oats (not instant or quick cooking)
2 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Position a rack in the center of the oven, and heat the oven to 350 degrees F. Butter a standard 12-cup muffin tin, coat with nonstick cooking spray, or line with paper liners.

In a medium bowl, stir together the wheat bran and hot water until the bran is completely moistened. Add the zucchini, raisins, pecans, coconut, and apple and stir until well mixed.

Using a stand mixer fitted with the whip attachment, beat together the sugar and eggs on medium speed for 3 to 4 minutes, or until the mixture thickens and lightens. (If you use a handheld mixer, this same step will take 6 to 8 minutes). On low speed, slowly drizzle in the oil and then the vanilla. Don’t pour the oil in all at once. Add it slowly so it has time to incorporate into the eggs and doesn’t deflate the air you have just beaten into the batter. Adding it should take about 1 minute. When the oil and vanilla are incorporated, remove the bowl from the mixer stand.

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In a medium bowl, stir together the flour, oats, baking powder, salt, and cinnamon until well mixed. Add the flour mixture to the egg mixture and fold carefully just until the dry and wet ingredients are well combined. Then add the bran mixture and fold again just until well combined. Spoon the batter into the prepared muffin cups, dividing it evenly and filling the cups to the rim (almost overflowing).

Bake 35 to 45 minutes, or until the muffins are lightly browned on top and spring back when pressed in the middle with a fingertip. Let cool in the pan on a wire rack for 20 minutes, then remove the muffins from the pan.

The muffins taste best the day you bake them, but they can be stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 3 days. If you keep them for longer than 1 day, refresh them in a 300 degree F oven for 8 to 10 minutes.