

A photograph of a green apple on a wooden desk. In the background, there is a red notebook with a pencil, a blue notebook, and a brown paper bag. The text is overlaid on the image in purple callout boxes.

Lunchbox Bites

*A Dozen Delicious Recipes
for On-The-Go Vegan Eats*

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Cinnamon-Swirled Banana Sandwich Bread

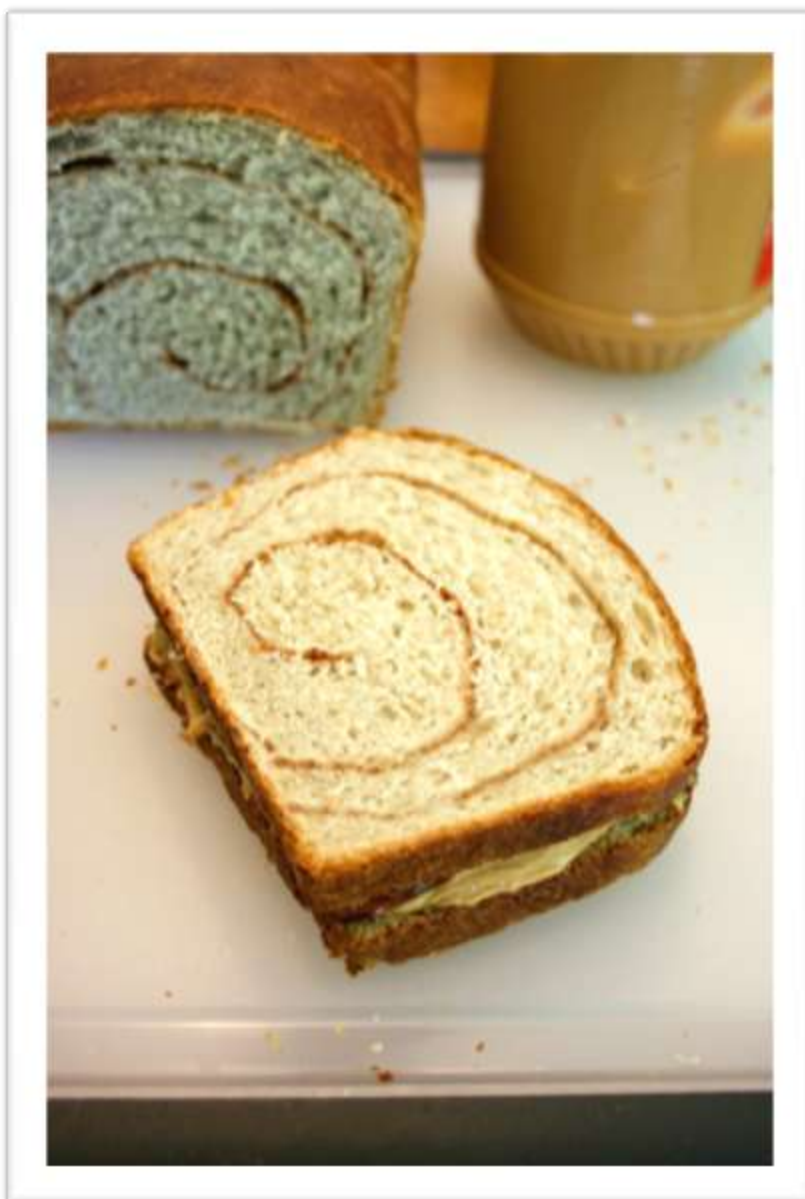
Sandwich bread doesn't have to be just plain old white or wheat- Add some fruity flavor and a fun, spicy swirl, and you'll have a sandwich that no one would dare trade! Breathe some new life into the standard PB&J with this sweet loaf, or toast up a slice and slather it with a buttery spread for breakfast. If you have extra time on the weekends or delayed openings, it makes incredible French toast, too!

Bread Dough:

2/3 Cup Plain Soymilk
1 Packet Active Dry Yeast
1 Cup Banana Puree
(About 3 Medium Bananas)
3 Tablespoons Margarine,
Melted and Divided
1/2 Teaspoon Vanilla
Extract
1/4 Cup Dark Brown
Sugar
3 - 4 Cups Bread Flour
1/2 Teaspoon Salt
1/4 Teaspoon Ground
Ginger

Cinnamon Swirl:

1/4 Cup Granulated Sugar
1 Tablespoon Ground
Cinnamon



Directions:

Gently microwave the soymilk for just a minute, so that it's warm but not hot, and sprinkle the yeast on top. Let it sit until it becomes frothy, about 5 - 10 minutes.

Once re-energized, pour the yeast mixture into your stand mixer, along with the banana puree, 2 tablespoons of the melted margarine, vanilla, and brown sugar, stirring briefly to combine. Add in about 3 cups of the flour in addition to the salt and ginger, and use the dough hook attachment to incorporate it. Give it time to fully incorporate the dry ingredients before adding anything else. Let the mixer knead the dough at a very low speed for about 10 minutes. If you do not have a stand mixer, you can also do this step by hand, kneading the dough for about 10 minutes once it begins to come together. If the dough is too sticky to handle, add in more flour, 1/4 cup at a time, until it feels tacky and elastic but not sticky. Shape it by hand into a smooth ball, and place it into a lightly greased bowl. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and set aside in a warm place for about two hours, until the dough has more than doubled in volume.

Use your knuckles to gently but firmly knead out the bubbles, and turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Press or roll it into a rectangle as long as it will go, making sure to keep the short ends 8 1/2 inches long. Combine the cinnamon and sugar and sprinkle it liberally over the dough, leaving one short end unadorned. Starting with the short end that is fully covered with cinnamon and sugar, roll it up tightly and use a dab of water to seal the plain end. Crimp slightly, and place the loaf with the seam-side down into a greased 4 1/2 x 8 1/2 inch loaf pan. Spritz the top with cooking spray, and let it proof once more for about an hour. Once the loaf begins to peek out above the rim of the pan, you can start preheating your oven to 375 degrees.

Bake for 25 - 30 minutes, until it becomes a deep amber color and smells incredible. While it's still hot, brush the remaining tablespoon of margarine over the top so that the crust stays soft. Let the loaf cool in the pan for about 15 minutes before moving it to a wire rack. Slice once it has completely cooled.

Yields 1 Loaf, 12 - 14 Slices

Best Bran Muffins

What could be more leaden and stereotypically "crunchy granola" than the tired old bran muffin, right? Wrong! Still healthy enough that you don't regret having one (or two) for breakfast and delicious enough that you would actually want to grab that second, this is one revised classic worth having on hand for fast morning meals. They freeze beautifully, so you can make a batch on the weekend and have them on hand all week long.



Muffins:

- 1 Cup Whole Wheat Flour
- 1 Cup Wheat Bran
- 1/2 Cup Rolled Oats
- 1 Teaspoon Baking Soda
- 1/2 Teaspoon Salt
- 1/4 Cup Canola Oil
- 1/4 Cup Granulated Sugar
- 1 Tablespoon Molasses
- 1 Small Banana
- 1 1/2 Cups Plain Soy milk
- 1 Tablespoon Apple Cider Vinegar
- 1/4 Cup Dark Chocolate Chips
- 1/4 Cup Slivered Almonds

Topping:

- 3 Tablespoons Rolled Oats
- 3 Tablespoons Turbinado Sugar
- 3 Tablespoons Slivered Almonds

Directions:

Preheat your oven to 375 degrees and lightly grease 12 muffin cups.

In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, wheat bran, oats, baking soda and salt so that everything is thoroughly combined. Set aside.

In a separate bowl, whisk the oil, sugar, and molasses together. Mash the banana with a fork, and stir that in as well. Mix the vinegar into the soymilk, let stand for about 5 minutes to curdle, and then pour that into the mixture of wet ingredients as well.

Pour the wet ingredients into the bowl of dry ingredients, and stir with a spatula until just combined- A few lumps are just fine! Toss in the chocolate chips and almonds and fold them in so that they're distributed well throughout the batter. Equally distribute the batter between your prepared muffin cups, mounding them up slightly in the center. Mix together all of the topping ingredients and sprinkle over the raw batter.

Bake for 15 - 18 minutes until a toothpick pulls cleanly out of the center. Let cool for 10 minutes in the pans before moving them to wire racks to finish cooling.

Yields 12 Muffins

Brownie Bites

When all you need is just a tiny bit of chocolate indulgence, these simple treats are sure to satisfy. Perfect for packing away into lunch bags and automatically portion controlled, they're small morsels of decadence that are sure to quell cravings when you're on the go. So simple and fast that even the most inexperienced baker can whip out trays full of these tiny delights with ease; the most difficult part of this recipe might be trying to resist making it all the time!

1/2 Cup Dark Brown Sugar
1/2 Cup Granulated Sugar
1/2 Cup Canola Oil
1/2 Cup Plain Soymilk
1/2 Teaspoon Salt
1/2 Teaspoon Vanilla
Extract
3/4 Cup Dutch Process
Cocoa Powder
1 Cup All-Purpose Flour
1/4 Teaspoon Baking
Powder
1/2 Cup Semi-Sweet
Chocolate Chips or Chunks



Directions:

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees, and grease two mini-muffin pans.

Combine both sugars in a medium bowl and add in the oil, soymilk, salt, and vanilla whisking well until fully emulsified. Add in the cocoa, flour, and baking powder all at once, and start mixing slowly so that none of the dry ingredients fly out onto the table. Once nearly combined, toss in your chocolate pieces and stir until all of the ingredients are incorporated and evenly distributed, and divide the batter between your prepared tins. They should be filled almost all the way up to the top, so don't be shy when doling out the brownie mixture.

Bake 12 - 14 minutes until the brownie bites are no longer shiny on top. They may still be gooey on the inside so a toothpick test won't be an accurate way to test for doneness. Wait until the brownies are cool to the touch before turning them out onto a rack to cool completely.

Yields 24 Brownie Bites

Chipsters

What do you get when you mix salty vending machine snacks with sweet cookie dough? The only thing I could make without leaving my dorm for baking ingredients! While the choices for vegan munchies can be far and few between on campus, they certainly do exist, and those slim options led me to create something that was much greater than its parts. Sure to resonate with those who tend to go for more savory treats as well as die-hard sugar addicts, these cookies prove that even unlikely combinations can go together wonderfully.



1/2 Cup Margarine
1/2 Cup Dark Brown Sugar
1/4 Teaspoon Vanilla
Extract
1 Cup All-Purpose Flour
1/2 Teaspoon Baking
Powder
2 Tablespoons Plain Soy
Yogurt
1 Ounce Roasted, Salted
Peanuts, roughly
chopped
1 1.5-Ounce Bag Potato
Chips, Crushed

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

First, soften your margarine a bit, and then cream in the brown sugar and vanilla extract. Sift the flour and baking powder together, and slowly incorporate the dry goods into the mixing bowl, beating just until they are mostly combined, and you have floury crumbs. Add in the soy yogurt, peanuts, and chips all at the same time, and mix well until the dough comes together and everything is completely incorporated.

Drop scant tablespoons of dough onto an ungreased baking sheet, spaced at least an inch or so apart. Bake for 10 - 12 minutes until no longer shiny on top and ever so slightly browned around the edges. Let the cookies rest on the sheet for about 2 minutes before transferring them to a cooling rack.

Yields Approximately 48 - 72 Cookies

Coffee-Buzz Energy Bars

After pulling a few too many all-nighters, I've found that the only thing that keeps me going through those dark hours of the night is a tall cup of hot coffee. While a healthy snack would probably be better brain food, it's hard to come by an easy and delicious nibble when your brain is tangled up with math or science. For those midnight munchies, these caffeine-infused granola bars give you the best of both worlds- hearty, satisfying oats, a handful of sweet chocolate chips, and of course, that energizing hit of coffee. You might want to make a double batch in a 13 x 9 inch pan if you plan on bringing them to a group study session, or else they'll all be gobbled up before you even crack the books open!

3 Cups Rolled Oats
1 Tablespoon Flax Seeds
1/4 Teaspoon Salt
1/2 Cup Semi-Sweet Chocolate Chips
1/4 Cup Margarine, Melted
1/3 Cup Brown Rice syrup
1/4 Cup Dark Brown Sugar, Packed
1/4 Cup Cold Coffee
1 1/2 Teaspoons Instant Coffee Granules



Directions:

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees and lightly grease an 8 x 8 inch square baking pan.

Take half of the oats along with all of the flax and toss them into your food processor, blender, or spice grinder. Pulse a couple times until you get a coarse meal. In a large bowl, stir this meal together with the remaining whole oats, salt, and chocolate chips.

In a separate bowl, mix the melted margarine, brown rice syrup, brown sugar, coffee, and instant coffee together briefly so that the sugar and instant coffee dissolve. Pour this mixture into the bowl of dry ingredients and stir to combine. Dump everything into your prepared pan and use a spatula to flatten it down so that it evenly fills the pan. Bake for 15 - 20 minutes, until the edges just begin to brown a bit and it's no longer shiny on top. Let it cool completely in the pan before cutting into bars.

Yields 12 - 16 Bars

Hummus Crackers

Whether I'm at home or out at school, my favorite lunch always includes hummus and crackers. One day it just hit me that since this pair was already a match made in heaven, why shouldn't it be fused into a single delicious snack? Thus was born the hummus cracker, good enough to eat on its own but also great with any number of dips. It's also extremely versatile, so feel free to use your favorite flavor of hummus- There are a lot of different varieties to choose from out there!



1/2 Cup Whole
Wheat Flour
2 Tablespoons
[Garbanzo Bean
Flour](#)
1/4 Teaspoon Salt
1 1/2 Tablespoons
Canola Oil
1/2 Cup Hummus

Directions:

These crackers come together very quickly and aren't the least bit fussy. First, preheat your oven to 325 degrees and line a baking sheet with a silpat or parchment paper.

In a medium bowl, just take a wide spatula and thoroughly cream all of the ingredients together to create a smooth, cohesive ball of dough. Lightly flour a clean surface, roll out the dough to about 1/4 inch thickness and prick it all over with a fork. Cut the dough into equally sized strips, about 1 inch wide and 3 inches long, and lay them on a lightly greased baking sheet. Bake for 20 - 30 minutes, until lightly browned on the edges.

Yields 36 – 48 Crackers



Peanut Butter Bomb-Shell Blondies

If you ask me, the best part of school was when that bell finally rang and released me back home. Some sort of delicious treat would always be waiting for me there, and with just a few bites, the frustrations of the day were instantly forgotten. While I never had these blondies as a kid, I sure wish I had! With a combination of bananas, chocolate, all topped off with a creamy dollop of peanut butter, what's not to love? They might not be the best choice to pack into a lunchbox since the topping is rather soft, but that makes them a perfect reward to keep at home.

Banana Blondies:

1/4 Cup Margarine
3/4 Cup Brown Sugar
1/4 Cup Granulated Sugar
2 Teaspoons Vanilla Extract
2 Mashed Bananas
1 Cup All Purpose Flour
1/2 Teaspoon Baking Powder
1/2 Teaspoon Salt
1/3 Cup Chocolate Chips

Peanut Butter Topping:

1/2 cup Creamy Peanut Butter
2 Tablespoons Margarine, softened
2 Tablespoons Granulated Sugar
1 Tablespoon All-Purpose Flour



Directions:

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees and lightly grease an 8 x 8 inch square pan.

Start by creaming the margarine and both sugars together, until completely combined. Add in the vanilla and bananas, mix briefly to incorporate everything, and set aside.

In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, and salt. Toss the chocolate chips in to coat with flour, and then slowly add this mixture into the banana mixture. Be sure to pause occasionally to scrape down the sides to ensure that everything is getting mixed in.

To make the topping, simply mix everything together until smooth.

Pour the batter into your prepared pan and use a spatula to smooth the top. Drizzle the topping over it and use a knife or spatula to spread/swirl it in. Bake for 25 - 30 minutes until lightly browned around the edges.

Let cool completely before cutting.

Yields 12 - 16 Blondies

Peanut Butter and Jelly Toaster Tarts

Rushed for time and tempted to just grab a convenient shrink-wrapped pastry in the vending machine? Save your dollar for something much more wholesome, but even more delicious! These are easily par-cooked and then frozen so that you can toast them up as needed for a warm breakfast. You can also go all out and add a simple confectioner's sugar glaze and even sprinkles to mimic the iconic Pop-Tart®.



Pastry Dough:

1/2 Cup All-Purpose Flour
1/2 Cup Whole Wheat
Pastry Flour
2 Tablespoons Dark
Brown Sugar
1/4 Cup Vegetable
Shortening
2 Tablespoons Margarine
2 - 3 Tablespoons Plain
Soy milk

Filling:

1/4 Cup Fruit Spread of
Choice
1/4 Cup Peanut Butter

Glaze (optional):

1 Cup Confectioner's
Sugar
1-2 Tablespoons Water
1/4 Teaspoon Vanilla
Extract

Directions:

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees. Line a baking sheet with a silpat or parchment paper and set aside.

Combine both flours and sugar together in a medium bowl, and add in the shortening and margarine. Use a fork or pastry cutter to cut the two fats in, until you have coarse crumbs. Add in the soymilk one tablespoon at a time until everything comes together into a cohesive ball of dough.

Divide the dough into 2 equal-sized balls, and on a floured surface, roll each out into rectangles of the same size. Cut each large rectangle into 8 smaller rectangles that are about the size of the average Pop-Tart®. Spread about 1 Tablespoon of both the peanut butter and jam of your choice on half of the rectangles, leaving the outer edges clear. Prick the blank rectangles a few times with a fork, and lay them over the pieces with jam. Dab the edges with a tiny amount of water to seal the two pieces together, pressing out as much air as possible.

If you want to par-cook them to freeze and then toast later, bake the toaster tarts for about 12 minutes, until the pastries hold together but are still rather pale. If you want finished tarts, continue baking them for an additional 5 - 8 minutes, until golden brown. Let cool completely before glazing, if desired. The glaze is made by simply whisking everything together, adding more or less water until it's the consistency that you want.

Yields 8 Pastries

Pie Cups

Fruit pies are always a delight to eat warm and gooey straight from the oven, or chilled from the fridge, hardly anyone can resist the temptation. By baking individual miniature pies in muffin cups, not only do you get the pleasure of hording a whole pie for yourself, but they're very easy to pack up and save for a dessert or snack at school. Any other berry could be substituted depending on your preferences, or even chopped apples, pears, or pretty much any other solid fruit you can get your hands on.

Pie Crust:

1 1/2 Cups All-Purpose Flour
2 Tablespoons Granulated Sugar
1/2 Cup Margarine
2 - 3 Tablespoons Ice Water

Blueberry Filling:

1/3 Cup Granulated Sugar
1 1/2 Tablespoons Cornstarch
1/4 Teaspoon Salt
1 Teaspoon Lemon Zest
1 1/2 Cups Blueberries, Fresh or Frozen



Directions:

For the crust, first combine the flour and sugar together in a medium bowl. Chop the margarine into a number of small pieces before dropping them in, and use a fork or pastry cutter to cut it into the dry mixture. Once you have achieved the consistency of coarse crumbs with a few larger chunks scattered about, begin adding the ice water, one tablespoon at a time. Stir thoroughly and as soon as the mixture comes together into cohesive dough, use your hands to press it into a ball. Wrap up the ball of dough in plastic wrap and chill it in the fridge for at least 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, you can make the blueberry filling. Combine all of the filling ingredients in a medium saucepan and set it over moderate heat on the stove. Stirring occasionally, cook until the berries have burst and the mixture has thickened slightly, about 5 - 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and let cool. At this point, you can preheat your oven to 375 degrees.

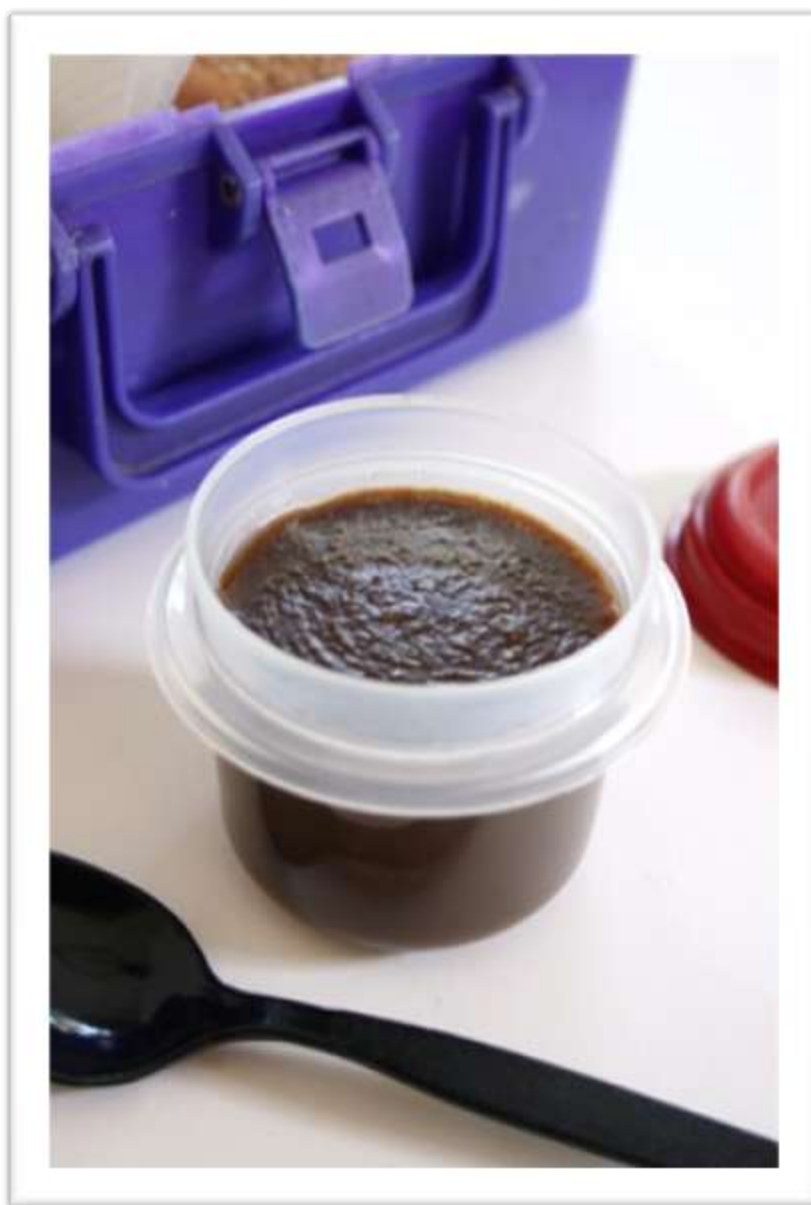
Lightly flour a clean surface and roll out your chilled dough on it, so that it's about 1/8 inch thick. Use a biscuit cutter, clean aluminum can, or drinking glass to cut out circles. Grease 6 muffin cups and gently ease your rounds of dough into the indentations, using your fingers to press it into the corners. Roll the scraps back out and cut them into thin strips. After filling each cup most of the way to the top with blueberries, lay the strips on top in a small lattice pattern. You could also cut out smaller rounds, punch out a hole in the center, and cover the entire tops of the pies.

Use a dab of water to seal the tops if necessary, and pop them into the oven. Immediately lower the temperature to 350 degrees, and bake for 18 - 22 minutes, until golden brown.

Yields 6 Pie Cups

Root Beer Pudding

Although it may look like your hum-drum chocolate pud from afar, one bite will instantly tell you different. The fizzy drink can now make an appearance in your child's lunch box, as a refreshing alternative to those mass-produced pudding cups or "fruit snacks" that are based primarily on chemicals and artificial colors. Sweetened by the soda alone, it requires few ingredients and very little time. Your child might even be able to help out in the kitchen with this one!



1 1/2 Cups Regular Root
Beer Soda
1/2 Cup Soymilk
2 Tablespoons
Cornstarch
1 Teaspoon Root Beer
Extract
Pinch Salt

Directions:

Combine everything in a medium saucepan, thoroughly whisking to make sure there are no lumps of cornstarch remaining. Heat over a moderate flame, stirring occasionally, just until it comes to a boil. Turn off the heat and pour the hot pudding into small, approximately 4-ounce, plastic containers. (You can also use emptied and cleaned soy yogurt containers with lids.)

If you don't want a skin to form on the surface, simply lay a sheet of plastic wrap directly on top of the pudding. Let cool to room temperature before moving the pudding into the fridge to set, at least two hours.

Cover with lids and pack into lunch boxes.

Yields 4 Servings

Steel-Cut Oatmeal Cookies

Steel-cut oats are one of my favorite breakfast staples; Comforting, filling, and satisfying enough to tide you over for hours, they're an ideal energizer for someone with a full day ahead of them. The only trouble is that they do take a bit of time to cook, and that's time I just don't have on a week day morning. By using up leftover oats cooked over the weekend, these cookies are like portable bowls of oatmeal, ready to go when you are. Feel free to use any dried fruits or spices that you might use to dress up your standard bowl of oats, too.

1 Cup Cooked and Cooled Steel-Cut Oats
1/2 Cup Brown Sugar
1/4 Cup Canola Oil
1 Cup [Light Spelt Flour](#)
(or Whole Wheat Pastry Flour)
1/2 Teaspoon Baking Powder
1/2 Cup Chopped Dried Apples
1/2 Teaspoon Ground Cinnamon
1/2 Teaspoon Vanilla Extract
1/2 Teaspoon Salt



Directions:

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees and line two baking sheets with silpats or parchment paper.

This is one cookie that is so easy, you could make it while half- asleep. Simply mix everything together in a large bowl, and scoop out lumps of batter using a 3-ounce ice cream scooper, or just a scant 1/4 cup measure. Place the cookies about an inch apart on your prepared baking sheets, and bake for 15 - 18 minutes. When done, they should no longer look shiny on top and the edges should be turning just the faintest golden brown. Let the cookies rest on the baking sheet for 10 minutes, and then yank them off the sheet so that they can cool completely.

Yields Approximately 12 Cookies

Steel-cut oats are notorious for taking a long time to cook and then burning at the last minute. I too had a lot of trouble preparing them perfectly, until I took them off the stove and into the oven. The easiest way to cook these groats is to preheat your oven to 300 degrees and combine 4 cups of water with 1 cup of steel-cut oats in a covered dish. Leave it alone for 45 - 60 minutes and voila, perfectly chewy and oats! This method makes much more than you'll need for this recipe, but you can easily make a bigger batch of cookies, or eat the oats as is.

Strawberry Crispy Rice Treats

Sweet and simple, rice treats seem to be a quintessential childhood snack, and one that I still have a soft spot for. One of these sweet bars in my lunchbox brightens any previous bad moods, and always puts a smile on my face. The beauty of these traditionally vanilla treats is that they provide an excellent blank canvas to paint new and exciting flavors on, without straying too far from the original experience. These strawberry-flavored treats are sure to resonate with even the pickiest kids, and adults, too!



1 Tablespoon Margarine
1/2 Cup Strawberry Jam
or Preserves
1/3 Cup Granulated
Sugar
1 Teaspoon Lemon Zest
1 Teaspoon Vanilla
Extract
4 Cups Crispy Rice
Cereal

Directions:

Lightly grease an 8x8 inch square baking pan, pour your cereal into a separate bowl, and set both aside.

Set a saucepan over medium heat and place the margarine in it first so that it melts completely. Add in the jam and sugar, stirring until it has dissolved and becomes smooth syrup, more or less. Let it cook at a slow, steady boil for about 5 minutes. Remove your pan from the heat and stir in the zest and vanilla.

Pour the sugar mixture over your bowl of cereal, and carefully but quickly fold it in using a wide spatula. Dump the whole thing into your prepared pan, and press down gently with your spatula so that it evenly fills the whole space. Allow it to cool completely before cutting.

Yields 12 - 16 Bars

Thank you

I hope that you and your family
enjoy every last recipe!

For more delicious ideas, visit my
blog: [Bittersweet](#) or check out my
cookbook: [My Sweet Vegan](#).