

Sneaking some healthy, green fats into morning muffin treats - Lime (and Avocado) Streusel Mini Muffins -

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For me, this has been the year of the avocado.

In addition to using them in all the usual suspects — guacamole, cobb salads and club sandwiches — my family also has been smashing them up on toast (try topping them with tomato slices, prosciutto, a drizzle of olive and a sprinkle of sea salt), tucking slices in flatbread wraps and sushi rolls, tossing cubes with tomatoes and balsamic for a quick salad, or using them as a nutritious and tasty topping for egg white omelets.



And it's a great thing to do. Avocados are bursting with healthy fats that satisfy, as well as fiber that fills you up. They also are a good source of several vitamins, including vitamin C and folate. What you may not know is that because of its creamy-fatty texture, avocado also can be used in baked goods in place of other fats.

For best swapping results, only substitute part of a recipe's regular fat with avocado. Also, be aware that avocados will add a pale green color to your baked goods. This goes mostly unnoticed in items such as chocolate cake, but could be off-putting in your vanilla cake. But in the case of my lime and avocado streusel mini muffins — one of my favorite weekend breakfast treats — the color can be a good thing.

I make mine gluten-free by using a combination of almond meal, coconut flour and a nice medium-weight gluten-free flour (check the flour label, as you are looking for 2 to 4 grams of protein per 1/4 cup for this recipe). Or you can use wheat flour, if you prefer.

Whip up a batch of these to enjoy on the weekend, then stick the extras in zip-close plastic freezer bag for a quick snack that thaws in minutes on the countertop. They also happen to make a great breakfast-in-bed treat for the moms in your life on Mother's Day.

LIME (AND AVOCADO) STREUSEL MINI MUFFINS

Start to finish: 30 minutes

Makes 24 mini muffins

For the muffins:

1/2 medium avocado, peeled and pitted (about 1/4 cup flesh)

2 tablespoons butter, room temperature

2/3 cup sugar

1 teaspoon lime zest
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 eggs
3/4 cup gluten-free baking flour or whole-wheat pastry flour
1/2 cup almond meal (finely ground almonds)
1/4 cup coconut flour
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1/4 teaspoon baking soda
1/4 teaspoon table salt
1/4 cup buttermilk
1/4 cup lime juice
1/4 cup apple sauce
For the streusel topping:
1 tablespoon butter
2 tablespoons packed brown sugar
2 tablespoons flour (gluten-free or whole wheat pastry)
1/8 teaspoon table salt

Heat the oven to 350 F. Coat 2 mini muffin pans (you need 24 muffin cups) with baking spray or line with paper muffin cups.

In a large bowl, use an electric mixer to cream together the avocado, butter and sugar until pale and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Mix in the zest and vanilla. Add the eggs, one at a time, mixing until incorporated after each. Set the avocado mixture aside.

In a medium bowl, sift together the flour, almond meal, coconut flour, baking powder and soda, and the salt. If the almond meal is too coarse to pass through the sifter, simply whisk it into the sifted flours to ensure even blending. In a small bowl or measuring cup, stir together the buttermilk, lime juice and applesauce.

Add both the flour mixture and the buttermilk blend to the avocado mixture, half at a time, blending on low with the mixer until completely incorporated. Spoon the batter into the prepared muffin pans, filling each cup about three-quarters of the way.

In a small bowl, use a fork to mix together the streusel ingredients until the streusel resembles coarse sand or small pebbles. Spoon a small amount of streusel on top of each muffin, then bake until the muffins are turning golden and spring back when touched lightly, 15 to 18 minutes. Remove from the oven and allow to cool for a few minutes before removing from the muffin pans.

Nutrition information per muffin: 80 calories; 35 calories from fat (44 percent of total calories); 4 g fat (1.5 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 20 mg cholesterol; 11 g carbohydrate; 1 g fiber; 6 g sugar; 2 g protein; 95 mg sodium.

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