

These Muffins Don't Need Gluten or Dairy to be Yummy!

By Susie Iventosch



Gluten/dairy-free cinnamon streusel muffins Photo Susie Iventosch

There are not many conversations around food these days that don't involve a discussion of gluten allergies or intolerance, and the growing demand for a gluten-free diet. At first, I was somewhat skeptical, thinking it a bit trendy unless there was a real diagnosis of Celiac disease. But more and more people seem to be testing the results of such a diet, and many Lamorinda restaurants now offer gluten-free menu options. Quite a few of the people I've spoken with who've gone off gluten say that

chronic pains have disappeared, or it's improved gastrointestinal issues, or they've had an easier time losing weight, or they just plain feel better.

So what is gluten, anyway? By definition, gluten is a mixture of two proteins present in cereal grains, especially wheat, but not limited to wheat, and it is responsible for the elastic texture of dough made with flour from these grains. People who have Celiac disease have an abnormal immune response to gluten and shouldn't eat it. Those with an intol-

erance or sensitivity to gluten, may feel better by avoiding it.

According to articles on WebMD.com and Harvard Health Publications, it is strongly suggested that a person consult with their doctor before going on a gluten-free diet, especially if they suspect a gluten allergy, or Celiac disease – a disease that causes damage to the small intestine when gluten is ingested. The reason for this is that the diet can skew the results and interfere with a true diagnosis. Also, a gluten-free diet can be lacking in minerals, vitamins and fiber. People who choose to eat a gluten-free diet may want to consult with a nutritionist to make sure they are getting the fiber they're accustomed to and the essential vitamins and minerals they need.

Although I've never had a problem with gluten or wheat, I do love these muffins and would like others, even those with gluten or dairy issues, to be able to enjoy them. So, I have replaced the wheat flour with rice flour and the milk with coconut milk. The recipe turned out nearly identical to the regular recipe, except that the rice flour makes them a little finer in texture. Next time, I am going to try making them with apple juice in place of the milk and see how that works out. Enjoy!

Team Members Pitch In

By Cathy Tyson



David Kleven Photos provided

Whole Foods marketing team members are pitching in their non-work talents for a fundraising drive that runs through the end of March. Professional chalk artist David Kleven, a team member who is responsible for all of the lovely chalk signage throughout the store will be donating some unique handmade chalk art, Lani Lee from Customer Service Support, a youth minister and busy mom of five will be donating healing body work, and Jennifer Spencer, who works in the bakery department will also be contributing her original artwork.



Lani Lee

These are just some of the donations that shoppers can look for and bid on to raise money to go to the Whole Planet Foundation – a charitable non-profit organization that seeks to alleviate poverty through micro-credit loans in communities around the world that supply Whole Foods Markets with products. The grocery store chain covers all of the operating costs of the foundation, so that donations go directly to micro-lending.

Since 2006 they have partnered with professor Muhammed Yunus and the Grameen Bank, co-recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize, to give something back to those in communities who have helped the store succeed, while focusing on world poverty and hunger. The foundation is currently supporting over 330,000 women micro-entrepreneurs in 59 different countries around the world. Giving back via direct micro-credit loans is a way to create constructive economic partnerships with the poor in the developing world. Loans go to a wide variety of businesses like furniture making, tailoring, handicrafts, homemade and bakery made foods, clothing and more.



Jennifer Spencer

For example, Pod from Borikhan in Laos used her loan to enhance her weaving business; she recently purchased a used sewing machine to finish her hand-made woven products that she sells locally. With an average loan size of \$175, extending a relatively small amount of credit can make a world of difference to these women and help them support their families.

"This will offer a new perspective of our team members," says Jane Shafer, marketing and community relations team leader.



Sources:

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- <http://www.livescience.com/39726-what-is-gluten.html>
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Gluten/Dairy-Free Cinnamon Streusel Muffins

(Makes 12 muffins)

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup light brown sugar
- 2 cups rice flour
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 2/3 cup canola oil
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans or walnuts, or combination
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup lowfat coconut milk, or coconut milk creamer
- 1 teaspoon cider vinegar
- 1 teaspoon baking soda

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spray 12 muffin tins generously with cooking spray.

Mix first four ingredients together in a large bowl. Add oil and stir with a fork or spoon until crumbly. Set aside 1 cup of this mixture along with the chopped nuts for streusel topping.

To main batter, add eggs, coconut milk, vinegar and baking soda. Mix until smooth.

Divide batter evenly in the 12 muffin tins. Then, sprinkle streusel topping over each, completely covering batter with crumb topping.

Bake for approximately 20 minutes, or until tester comes out of muffin centers clean.

These can be stored in the freezer for several weeks.

Susie Iventosch is the author of Tax Bites and Tasty Morsels, which can be found at Across the Way in Moraga, www.amazon.com, and www.taxbites.net. Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com.

This recipe can be found on our website: www.lamorindaweekly.com. If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977.



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