

The perfect breakfast muffin to follow a filling Thanksgiving feast



Homemade Cinnamon Raisin English Muffins Photo Susie Iventosch

By Susie Iventosch

I was looking for bread recipes when I stumbled upon this great recipe for English muffins on Valerie's Kitchen cooking blog. It sounded like such a fun thing to do and so I went straight to it! They were delicious and the only thing I could think of to improve the recipe was to add raisins and cinnamon to her plain English muffins for a different kind of breakfast treat. The result was amazing and I think that you could probably add dried blue-

berries, cranberries, or whatever dried fruit you like to create your own version.

Made with yeast dough, these English muffins need to rise twice, and they also have two baking sessions. The first baking actually takes place on the griddle on top of the stove and then they're finished off in the oven. It's so much fun to see this soft, sticky dough come together as a batch of English muffins. They are super crispy and delicious and you can add just a hint of butter or your favorite jam for the perfect breakfast!

For Valerie's recipe:

www.fromvalerieskitchen.com/homemade-english-muffin

Homemade Cinnamon Raisin English Muffins

(Makes 16 English muffins)

INGREDIENTS

5 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon cinnamon
4 1/2 teaspoons granulated sugar
4 1/4 teaspoons yeast
2 3/4 cups warm water (about 110 F)
1 cup raisins
1 cup boiling water (for reconstituting raisins)

DIRECTIONS

Place raisins in a small bowl. Pour about one cup of boiling water over raisins. Allow to sit for about 20 minutes to soften and reconstitute raisins. When cool, squeeze the liquid from the raisins and discard the liquid. This process allows the raisins to stay nice and plump during the baking.

Mix flour, salt, cinnamon, sugar, yeast and raisins in a large mixing bowl. Blend with a whisk. Using a wooden spoon, slowly add water and mix until all of the dries are moist and there are no dry pockets of flour. The dough will be quite sticky at this point.

Keep dough in the mixing bowl and cover with a damp cloth. Place in a warm, draft-free spot in the house, (not in a heated oven) and allow to sit until double in size. This will take about one hour.

While the dough is rising, line two baking sheets with parchment and sprinkle them generously with corn meal.

When the dough has doubled in volume, divide it into 16 evenly sized balls. You will need to spray your hands with cooking spray or rub them with oil to keep them from sticking while you form the individual English muffins.

Form each muffin into a round and place them on the trays. Tuck in the edges as necessary to keep them round in shape. Flatten the dough slightly to be about 1/2-inch thick. Sprinkle the tops of the muffins with a little more corn meal.

Again, place the trays in a warm, draft-free place and allow to rise for another 20-25 minutes, until puffy.

Preheat oven to 375 F.

Preheat a cast-iron griddle on the stove over medium high heat. Spray the griddle with cooking spray and with a spatula transfer the muffins from the baking sheet to the griddle and cook until slightly browned. Flip and repeat. Once the muffins are browned, transfer them back to the baking sheet and bake in the oven for another 5 minutes or until cooked through. Remove from oven.

If you're ready to eat the English muffins right away, fork split them and toast them in the toaster or toaster oven. By fork splitting, I mean take a dinner fork and poke towards the center of the muffin all the way around. This will allow you to split them in half and it also yields a nice nubby surface with nooks and crannies that will be perfect to receive butter, peanut butter or jam.

Store unused muffins in a Ziploc baggie or a plastic container in the refrigerator until ready to use. Or, you can freeze them for several weeks, too.



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. Or visit <https://treksandbites.com>

Mother was sweet and now she is angry

By Linda Fodrini-Johnson

"Since my mother has shown signs of dementia, now confirmed as Alzheimer's, she seems to get angry all the time."

"Dad seems to be blaming me for everything that he can't remember and has a tendency to wander off if he is upset."

Family caregiving does not come with a manual; it is often by trial and error that primary caretakers learn what is upsetting the individual with a dementia to cause that person's reaction in an angry or hostile manner. Sometimes, it takes a lot of detective work trying to find the "trigger" to a behavior.

This anger can be expressed by shouting, screaming, pacing, wandering or striking out if someone is trying to restrain them. This type of behavior is difficult to understand and in order to find solutions, it takes some sensitivity and exploration. Understanding more about the individual with the dementia will help family and preserve the dignity of the individual, reducing stress for everyone.

Those with dementia aren't intentionally being dif-

ficult. It is more about the process of the illness and how it affects the ability to communicate thoughts and feelings. As dementia progresses, both receptive and expressive language skills decline. So, the result is that they don't understand what you are saying and they don't have the skills to find words for their feelings, which results in frustration and anger toward you.

In a recent support group session I did on Zoom, a couple attended, one with dementia and the other the caregiver. The individual with dementia had been in the health field as a professional. However, she was at least six years into the dementia journey. She heard a name spoken that was the same as a deceased relative (it was only the name of a participant) and she heard participants talk about caring for their mothers as well as spousal members talk about the burdens of caregiving. After the session, the caregiver said that the spouse was grieving the loss of the person's name she heard as if it was her family member all over again. She was also fearful she would lose her spouse, and wanted to go care for her mother who had died many years before.

You can see from this example that "triggers" to behaviors can come from the environment: situations in which they don't understand the conversations that may be outside their own experiences. This reaction should inform the family that they as much as possible will need to protect this person from situations that can cause triggers for her to want to be a helper, and those that cause her to feel sad because she thinks she is a burden.

Some tips to avoid negative/angry outbursts:

1) **Environment:** Be consistent with a routine. Do activities of daily living the same time every day. If you bring in a new item or person to the routine, expect some type of behavior change and reassure the person with dementia that they are safe. Physical changes like heat or cold can cause negative reactions such as is being hungry, thirsty or needing to use the bathroom and not being able to communicate that to you.

2) **Rationalizing:** Make your explanations simple. Don't give lots of information that could be hard for the individual to understand. For example, if you are needing to leave for an appointment, say something like, "We need to

leave early today because of traffic on the roads." Don't go into detail about why you need to get to an appointment early - make up a simple story that is easy to understand.

3) **Refusing:** This is more about confusion. So, when asking the person to do something, like eat breakfast, be sure to use a calm voice and not push. Instead of using the word breakfast, use the name of food you are serving, such as, "Your oatmeal is ready." Go away if that doesn't work and come back with a different soft approach.

Mood swings become more prevalent as the disease progresses. Each individual might have different triggers, so avoiding those will help you care for your family member longer and with less stress. Sometimes it can be a mystery for family to see what might be a "trigger." When this is the case I recommend working with a Professional Geriatric Care Manager and/or attending support groups and classes offered in your community or through the local Alzheimer's Association.

We have a team of four highly experienced Care Managers at Home Care Assistance, a monthly Zoom support group, and I offer a variety of classes. On Jan. 8 at 11

a.m., I will be doing a Zoom class specifically on "The Road Map from Diagnosis to Family Care." These support groups and classes are free and educational. Please give our office a call at (925) 937-2018 or email me at LFJohnson@HomeCareAssistance.com.

Get your "Flu Shot" and continue to social distance, wear masks and wash those hands.



Linda Fodrini-Johnson, MA, MFT, CMC, is a Licensed Family Therapist and Certified Care Manager. She has been practicing professional care management since 1984. Linda founded Eldercare Services, a full-service care management and home care company in 1989. Eldercare Services is now a division of Home Care Assistance and continues to provide Bay Area families with care management, advocacy, counseling, support groups and education.

Battling cancer, stroke for stroke



Photo provided

David Miller at the Soda Aquatic Center in Moraga.

By Jon Kingdon

Hellen Keller once said, "Life is either a daring adventure or nothing at all." It's a phi-

losophy that David Miller has taken to heart.

A Buffalo, New York native and graduate from the University of Michigan, Miller

worked in the health and fitness industry for 25 years doing everything from sales and marketing to club design, management and consulting. Miller originally came to California in 1986, lived briefly in San Diego before moving to Stockton, working for Abbott Laboratories. Miller then went on to work in Paris, Nairobi and Mexico City before returning to Orinda in 2013 and eventually settling in Montclair.

When Miller turned 50, his original idea was to do 50 triathlons in 50 weeks but the schedule could not be worked out. It was his sense of wanderlust that sent him off on a bicycle trek through all 50 states. So as not to be lonely, he brought along his pet weimaraner, Max. "My attitude was that I had to do something challenging. Max and I were like a little train going down the highway," said Miller. I had a mountain bike outfit with road tires. I was pulling Max in a dog carriage with a second trailer carriage carrying all my gear."

After this odyssey, Miller returned home and took on a number of jobs: "I've been tutoring French and Spanish, doing some translation work, working at a tennis club and as a lifeguard at the Campolindo High School's Soda Aquatic Center."

While working at the pool, Miller met a senior swimmer named Steve Steward, an avid daily swimmer who, on his own, committed to and completed a mission to swim 750,000 yards in one year. It was Steward's accomplishment that struck a chord for Miller, who set a goal for himself to swim a million yards the following year. However, for Miller, there had to be purpose to undertake such an effort.

That purpose was to raise funds for the Cancer Research Institute, which focuses on immunotherapy in the treatment of cancer. "As I was looking to start this project, I knew that the fight against cancer had to be the focal point," said Miller, whose father passed away from cancer,

sister had a bout of cancer, and mother had three bouts of cancer - and the list goes on and on with other friends and family.

No matter how you look at it, a million is a big number and even bigger when you attach yards to it. Add in further roadblocks with the temporary closure of the pool, the coronavirus and the poor air quality due to the fires in the area and it became that much more of a challenge for Miller.

Since January Miller has been swimming laps 22 to 24 days a month for about 1 1/2 hours each day. Each length of the pool is 25 yards and he swims each length 160 times for a total of 4,000 yards a day. Fortunately for Miller, he has the ability to stay on track and not lose count of his laps: "This is my meditation as I watch the pace clock and I count my laps."

Though he began swimming Jan. 1, Miller's intention was to begin his fundraising campaign a couple of months later:

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