

The perfect combination of tart and sweet make these muffins burst with flavor

By Susie Iventosch



Pumpkin Cranberry Muffins

Photos Susie Iventosch

Cranberries and pumpkin are a perfect food combination, especially at this time of year. The colors are so festive, and the flavors are so good together. I use fresh as opposed to dried cranberries for this recipe, and even though they are fresh, mine are most often frozen. Why? Because I buy them up in the fall when they are readily available in produce sections and then freeze them for using the rest of the year. We like to barbecue turkeys in the summer, and cranberry sauce is a must in our house for turkey dinner.

In these muffins, the little burst of tartness you get from the fresh cranberries comple-

ments the sweetness of the rest of the muffin. We love that pop of flavor, and plus they keep the muffins nice and moist. I generally just toss the frozen cranberries into the batter, but if you have fresh ones, just toss them in as they are. The streusel topping for this recipe is made with oil instead of butter, and the liquids in the batter are apple juice, oil and egg, so this entire recipe is nondairy. By the way, you can certainly add chopped nuts to the streusel for a bit more crunch. I'd recommend pecans if you do.

This recipe makes 12 regular muffins but is easily doubled and that might be really

Pumpkin Cranberry Muffins

(Makes 12 regular muffins)

INGREDIENTS

- Muffin Batter
- 1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup light brown sugar
- 1/2 tsp. baking soda
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1 1/2 tsp. pumpkin pie spice
- 1 large egg
- 1/2 cup pumpkin puree
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil (like canola)
- 1/4 cup apple juice
- 1 cup fresh cranberries (or frozen)
- Streusel Topping
- 2 tbsp. all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup light brown sugar
- 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp. cardamom or pumpkin pie spice
- 2 tbsp. canola oil

DIRECTIONS

Line a muffin tin with paper or parchment liners. Preheat oven to 350 F.

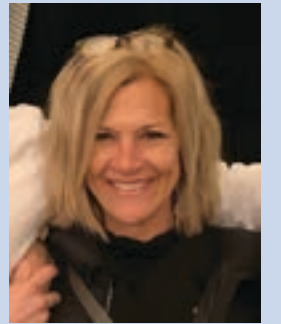
Place all dries (flour, brown sugar, baking soda, salt and pumpkin pie spice) in a large mixing bowl.

In a medium bowl, blend pumpkin puree, oil, egg, apple juice and cranberries. Stir the liquid ingredients into the dries and blend with a large spoon until integrated.

Spoon the batter into the prepared muffin tins. Sprinkle a spoonful of the streusel topping over each.

Bake for about 25 minutes, or until a toothpick comes out clean and the centers of the muffins spring back when touched with your finger.

Remove from oven and either eat immediately or cool and refrigerate. These muffins also freeze well, in case you are doing some early holiday baking!



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helpful during the busy holidays. They freeze very well, and you won't regret having an extra dozen on hand to feed your family and holiday guests.

A quick note – if you don't have pumpkin pie spice, you can blend cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, and allspice together for a similar flavor. Some people add a dash of cloves to this

mixture too. Use more cinnamon than the other ingredients, but you can play with the quantities of each that you like best.

Intuitive Writing Project holds book launch

By Emma Wong



IWP teachers Gretchen Cion, Elizabeth Perlman, and Melissa Quiter

Photos provided



Josslyn Grover reads her piece "Declarations of a Gen Z Stargazer"

Children, teens, and parents gathered at Orinda Books on Sept. 30 to celebrate the Intuitive Writing Project's launch of its biennial anthology, titled "Reemergence." There, young writers across age groups read aloud their newly published pieces.

The event reflects how far the Intuitive Writing Project (IWP) has come from its humble Bay Area beginnings, which included a studio in Orinda. Still, the organization holds to its roots by providing a safe space for students to express their emotions through writing.

Headquartered in the Bay Area, the IWP was founded by Elizabeth Perlman in 2013 to amplify the voices of young women and gender-expansive youth, celebrating various genres of writing, from fiction to general prose. Since then, the IWP has published over 750 works of student writing in their anthologies.

"I first had the dream for the IWP when I was 13, but I couldn't figure out how to implement it until many years later when I was in graduate school studying Transformative Arts," Perlman said. "I spent a year writing the 'Intuitive Leadership' curriculum, designing the brand materials, and developing a proper business plan."

Grounded in the principle of intuition, the IWP emphasizes a holistic approach to writing. Each session offers students ample time to jot down responses to a prompt, which they can revise and spin into larger pieces submitted to the anthology.

Many IWP students are local Orinda residents, having discovered the class via friends and family. "My sister has been writing with the IWP since she was in sixth grade — she's a sophomore in college now — so I became familiar with the organization through this connection," IWP student and high school junior Ava Moga said.

Parents were drawn to the IWP for its emphasis on uplifting teen voices. "I first remember seeing the writing space in Orinda's Theatre Square, with their beautiful photos and quotes outlined in pink in the windows," parent Sonya Grover said. "I loved their mission statement: 'declare what you know to be true!'"

As parents and IWP students filed into Orinda Books, they purchased copies of "Reemergence." While the anthology's title spotlights post-pandemic recovery and reclamation, student works run the gamut of genres, from dystopian fiction stories to poetic vignettes. When the open mic began, students read aloud from these pieces, having chosen passages or entire works to read.

"I loved reading [my work] aloud because there's so much more emotion and truth you can capture with your voice and facial expression," Grover, a high school junior, said of her essay about social media's impacts on Generation Z. "I think you can touch the heart of the piece more easily when reading it live."

Sonya Grover, who at-

tended the reading to support her daughter, added, "My daughter was included in the last two anthologies, so we knew about the launch. It's great that the reading was at Orinda Books this year — they are a wonderful local bookstore."

New writers also took to the stage, including high school junior Ava Moga. "I've never been published before, so this is really exciting for me," Moga said. "I decided to read and enter this piece into the anthology because I just really loved the entirety of it."

Writers weighed in on such topics as identity, mental health, and self-image. Many highlighted discussions of gender roles and societal expectations of young people. Ultimately, the anthology reading underscored the need to amplify teen voices through writing. Not only does creative writing allow for the expansion of young people's imaginations, but it also forms a crucial outlet for the youth to advocate for causes they support and call for change, allowing teens to feel truly supported.

"The value of sharing your writing is that it reinforces what we share in all our classes," Perlman said. "It's that who you are matters and that all your thoughts, feelings, stories, and ideas are valuable, important, and need to be heard."

Readers interested in a free class trial should contact elizabeth@intuitivewritingproject.org or visit www.intuitivewritingproject.org.

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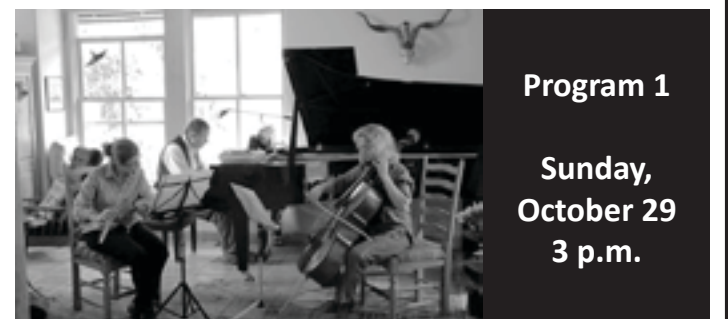
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