

Wheat-free, Dairy-free, Egg-free, Sugar-free Baking Tips

I was hung up for quite a while with the idea that you need wheat flour, milk, eggs and sugar to make tasty baked goods. Probably because those were the ingredients listed on almost all recipes for such! What a delight to find that just as tasty and far more healthful recipes can be made with alternative wholesome ingredients. Most recipes here are made with a combination of oat and raw buckwheat flours. There are many alternative grain and bean flours available and I've experimented with many of them- some with success, some with serious disappointment. Many have textures and flavors quite different from those that we are accustomed to. Wheat flour, of course, contains gluten which holds baked goods together. I found that adding a small portion of raw buckwheat flour to oat flour has a similar effect. Buckwheat is a highly nutritious grain so I felt it was a very worthwhile addition to oat flour, which has a neutral flavor that works well with a variety of baked goods. I also wanted to base my recipes on ingredients that are inexpensive and not too difficult to find.

Oat Flour- can be purchased in flour form, or can easily be ground in your own blender at home from rolled oats or steel-cut oats.

2 cups of rolled oat equals about 2 cups ground oat flour

2 cups of steel-cut oats equals about 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups oat flour

Raw Buckwheat Flour- I haven't commonly seen this available for sale in flour form (be careful you don't try to use "Buckwheat Flour" which is made from roasted buckwheat and has a much stronger flavor). You can easily grind raw buckwheat groats into buckwheat flour in your blender.

2 cups of raw buckwheat equals about 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups flour.

Ground Flax- This should not be purchased already ground because it expires so quickly. It is also much more economical to purchase flax seeds (brown or golden) and grind them yourself. Grind briefly in small portions in a coffee grinder. Avoid overgrinding so as not to destroy the beneficial oils. Ground flax mixed with water has an eggy consistency that helps to bind ingredients together, but also contributes beneficial oils and fiber to baked goods. The flavor is very mild, slightly nutty, so does not detract from the baked good taste. If the ground flax has a sharp smell or flavor, then it has expired. Be sure to store any leftover ground flax in the freezer to protect the oils.

Baking Powder- Baking powders commonly found in the grocery store contain aluminum as an ingredient. Be sure to seek out "Rumford" or "Featherweight" brand baking powders as neither contain aluminum.

Sweeteners- Honey, molasses, maple syrup, and pureed fruits (bananas, prunes, apples, etc.) are an excellent natural way to sweeten your baked goods. Each offer their own unique flavor to the baked goods- so don't necessarily just go by the recipe, play around with the alternatives.

Lazy Baking

Even in my "SAD food days" I really didn't bake too often, probably because I was too lazy. It just seemed like a pain to grease (and flour) pans and wash cookie sheets (pretty lazy, huh?!). But with these wheat-free recipes I've managed to get around even these "inconveniences" and I encourage you to try the same. For cookies and biscuits, I line baking sheets with unbleached parchment paper. No need to wash the pans- just toss out the used paper after baking. When making cakes and muffins I don't bother oiling the baking dishes. I find that after a short soak in the sink the pans clean up easily enough.

Oat Raisin Muffins

1 ¼ cup oat flour	¾ cup water
1/3 cup raw buckwheat flour	2 Tbsp. ground flax
¾ cup rolled oats	2 Tbsp. coconut oil
2 tsp. baking powder	¼ cup honey
¼ tsp. sea salt	½ cup raisins
1 tsp. cinnamon	½ cup chopped pecans

Mix dry ingredients in left column. Process water, ground flax, oil and honey in a blender. Mix these wet ingredients with the dry ingredients, then fold in raisins and pecans. Scoop into muffin cups and bake at 375 degree for 20-25 minutes.

-Muffin Tip-

For nice light muffins, mix batter as briefly as possible before scooping into muffin tins.

This recipe is one of many muffin recipes that can be made from a simple basic muffin recipe like the one presented on the next page.

Choose whatever combinations you'd like, then follow the mixing and baking instructions above.