

Healthy, Tasty Treats



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Greetings 516Ads.com readers! Many of you may remember my holiday column back in December, now I'm back with more. While the New Year has just begun, many of us are already struggling to keep up our resolutions. However, one of the

most popular resolutions is for people to get into shape and eat healthy. So, I decided to share with you some healthy recipes that will make 2008 a lighter year for all.

My first recipe is the classic blueberry muffin. These muffins contain wheat bran, whole-wheat flour and unsweetened applesauce. Therefore you are still able to enjoy this all time favorite without feeling guilty about it. You may even go for seconds. The next recipe is strawberry shortcake. Yes, you heard me right but instead of baking a whole cake these are made on biscuits. Making these treats on biscuits allows more portion control and is healthier for you. Assembling these little treats is so fun you are going to pass the recipe on to everyone. My last healthy recipe is chocolate brownies, yum. These brownies do not use real melted chocolate only cocoa powder and chocolate graham crackers. You can make them even healthier by adding dates or walnuts. So don't feel restricted from your favorite treats simply look for ways to make them healthier. Do not work around the food you love let it work around you!

Blueberry Muffins:

1 1/2 cups wheat bran
1-cup nonfat milk
1/2 cup unsweetened applesauce
1 egg
2/3-cup brown sugar
1/2-teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2-cup all-purpose flour
1/2-cup whole-wheat flour
1-teaspoon baking soda
1-teaspoon baking powder
1/2-teaspoon salt
1-cup blueberries



Preheat oven to 375. Grease muffin cups in a muffin pan or use paper muffin liners. Mix wheat bran and milk in a bowl and let stand for 10 minutes. In a large mixing bowl, mix applesauce, egg, brown sugar, and vanilla. Beat in the bran mixture. Combine all-purpose flour, whole-wheat flour, baking soda, baking powder, and salt in another bowl. Stir this into bran mixture until just blended. And lastly fold in the cup of blueberries. Now, put the mixture into muffin cups. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes.

Strawberry Shortcakes:

Strawberry
2 pounds fresh strawberries washed, patted dry, hulled, and quartered
1/2-cup sugar
2 tablespoons water
1 teaspoon grated orange zest



Macerate the strawberries by combining the strawberries, 1/2 cup of the sugar, water, and orange zest in a large bowl. Stir well to combine. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for about an hour. While the strawberries are chilling, make the biscuits.

Strawberry Shortcakes: Biscuit

- 1 1/4 cups self-rising flour
- 3/4-cup cake flour
- 1-tablespoon sugar
- 3/4-teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2-teaspoon salt
- 1/8-teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 stick cold unsalted butter, plus 2 tablespoons melted butter
- 1 1/4 cups heavy cream
- 1/4-cup all-purpose flour
- 1-tablespoon sugar



Preheat the oven to 475 degrees F.

Place the self-rising flour, cake flour, sugar, baking powder, salt, and baking soda into a medium-mixing bowl. Using your fingers or a pastry cutter, work the cold butter into the flour until there are no butter pieces larger than a pea. Add the heavy cream to the flour mixture and, using your hands or a rubber spatula, stir just until the cream and flour come together to form dough. Do not over mix! Sprinkle some of the all-purpose flour on a flat surface and place the dough on top of the flour. Using your hands, press the dough into a 1/2-inch thick disk about 8 inches in diameter. Use circle cutters to cut biscuit shapes into the dough. Place the biscuits on a small baking sheet and use a pastry brush to brush the tops with the melted butter. Sprinkle with the sugar. Bake in the oven for 10 to 12 minutes, or until golden brown. Allow biscuits to cool before serving. To assemble these cakes cut the biscuits in half and spoon the strawberry mixture onto the biscuit and add a dollop of whipped cream and enjoy!

Brownies:

- 16 whole chocolate graham crackers
- 2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1/4-teaspoon salt
- 2 large eggs
- 1 large egg white
- 1/3 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1/3 cup granulated sugar
- 2 teaspoons instant coffee granules
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2/3 cup chopped pitted dates (optional)
- 1/4-cup semisweet chocolate chips



Preheat oven to 300°F and prepare baking dish. Crush graham crackers into crumbs by placing them into a zip lock bag and rolling over them with a rolling pin. Transfer the crumbs to a small bowl; add cocoa and salt and mix well. Combine eggs, egg white, brown sugar and granulated sugar in a large bowl. Beat with an electric mixer at high speed until thickened, about 2 minutes. Blend in the coffee granules and vanilla. Gently fold in dates, chocolate chips and the reserved crumb mixture. Scrape the batter into the prepared baking dish, spreading evenly. Bake for about 25 to 30 minutes. Let cool completely in the pan on a wire rack before cutting.