

Banana Pumpkin Spice Muffins (Vegan, Nut-Free, Soy-Free)

By Hannah Kaminsky of Bittersweet Blog and My Sweet Vegan - Considering how many people talk about the dreaded "freshman 15," you would have to assume that there's actually good food to be found in college, right? Well, maybe on some campuses, but that's certainly not the issue here. No matter the time of day, trips to the dining hall prove futile, yielding a wilted salad of pale greens and perhaps a few sad slices of cucumber, but little more. Despite their desire to be vegan-friendly, the dining services are anything but, and I've been forced to scavenge for meals elsewhere. Of course, I'm sure it's been obvious by my lack of food posts that this quest could hardly be considered successful by a long shot. Lacking either ingredients or equipment to cook with, baking has been a pipe dream, since regular cooking has been about as easy as performing brain surgery with a dull sewing needle.

Hungry not only for the finished product but for the process that I find so soothing, the alchemy of turning flour and sugar into delicious works of art, even the most impossible odds couldn't prevent me from trying to bake for long. Smuggling out some ripe bananas from the cafeteria one day, I realized that I could finally scrape something edible together, provided those unreliable ovens in the dorm would cooperate. Starting with a basic banana muffin recipe from VegWeb, it wasn't long before the mad baker in me was tinkering around again, not content to leave well enough alone even with the barest minimum of ingredients on hand. Luckily, when I saw that the batter was mixing up into a somewhat dry concrete-like substance, I happened to have a jar of pumpkin butter on hand, and a delicious new recipe was born, just like that...

Banana Pumpkin Spice Muffins2 Ripe Bananas

1/4 Cup Dark Brown Sugar

1/4 Cup Canola Oil

1 Teaspoon Ground Cinnamon

1/2 Teaspoon Salt

1/4 Cup Whole Wheat Flour

1 Cup All-Purpose Flour

1/2 Teaspoon Baking Powder

1/2 Teaspoon Baking Soda

2/3 Cup Pumpkin ButterRolled Oats
Cinnamon

*This makes a small batch since I don't have tons of pans with me, so I got 6 standard muffins and 4 minis, but feel free to double this to make more than a dozen. Also, I can't say that this oven is completely trust worthy since there's no internal thermometer, so I would just keep a close eye on your muffins while they bake.

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees and either line a muffin tin with papers or coat it with cooking spray.

Mash your bananas thoroughly and add in the sugar and oil, stirring to combine. Toss in the cinnamon, salt, both flours, baking powder and soda all at once, and mix just enough to moisten all of the dry ingredients, but there's no need to be too thorough. Finally, add in the pumpkin butter and stir that well, being careful not to over-mix. The resulting batter should be rather thick.

Spoon the batter into your prepared tins, mounding it up generously in the centers. Sprinkle oats and cinnamon on top as desired, and bake for 15 - 25 minutes until golden brown, and a tooth pick inserted into the middle comes out clean. Let cool on a wire rack and enjoy.