Banana Oat Muffins

Ingredients

- 1 cup plain unsweetened organic Greek yogurt (I like Wallaby)
- 2 ripe bananas
- 2 eggs
- 2 cups rolled gluten free oats
- ¼ cup coconut sugar
- ½ tsp. black molasses
- 1½ tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- ½ cup organic semi-sweet dark chocolate chips

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 400F and prepare a muffin pan by spraying cavities with cooking spray or lining them with paper liners**. Set aside.
2. Add all ingredients except for chocolate chips to a blender or food processor and process on high until oats are broken down and batter is smooth and creamy. Stir in chocolate chips by hand.
3. Pour batter into prepared muffin pan, filling each cavity until it is about ¾ full. Optional: sprinkle a few chocolate chips over the top of each muffin.
4. Bake for 15-20 minutes, until the tops of your muffins are set and a toothpick inserted into the middle comes out clean. Allow muffins to cool in pan for ~ 10 minutes before removing. Store in an air-tight container for up to a week.

Notes

** If using paper liners, you'll want to spray them with cooking spray as well, since the lack of oil in these muffins could make them stick to the liners after baking.

Chocolate & Peanut Butter Chickpea Cookie Bars – Gluten Free & Vegan

The first time I made these bars I was seriously blown away by the buttery taste. These bars contain no butter, no flour, no refined sugar yet taste absolutely decadent and indulgent. Make sure you let others taste these before you reveal the secret ingredient…!

Yield: 12 squares

Ingredients

- 1 can chickpeas, rinsed & drained
- ½ cup peanut butter (I used a natural peanut butter that I ground myself at the store)
- ¾ cup maple syrup
- 2 tsp vanilla
- ¼ teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon baking soda
- ¾ cups semi-sweet or dark chocolate chips, reserve ¼ cup for the top
- pinch sea salt

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350F and line a loaf pan with parchment paper
2. In a food processor (or high speed blender), add all ingredients except chocolate chips and process until batter is smooth, similar consistency to hummus
3. Stir in 1/2 cup of the dark chocolate chips

4. Scoop the batter into the lined pan and smooth it out evenly. Lightly press the remaining chocolate chips over top
5. Bake for 60 minutes or until toothpick comes out clean. This will vary with ovens so be patient and wait until the edges are beginning to brown
6. Cool for 10 minutes in the pan then transfer to a rack for another 30 minutes for them to set. Cut into squares.

Miso Soup With Shitake Mushrooms And Scallions

You'll love this rich, flavorful version of miso soup, hearty enough for a meal. Mushrooms are rich in selenium, copper, zinc and iron, all nutrients that make your thyroid run more efficiently while sulfur-rich scallions are a natural detoxifier. Iodine-rich sea vegetables, like kombu and seaweed, are commonly found at your local Whole Foods in the Asian food section.

Fermented soybean products – miso, tempeh, shoyu, natto, tofu and tamari –are a healthy staple in many Asian cultures and are eaten in SMALL quantities.

Unfortunately in the U.S., we have mass produced soybeans without traditional sprouting or fermenting methods in products like soy protein, soy milks soy nuts, soy meats, which have been linked to thyroid disease, digestive problems, reproductive disorders, cancer and other illnesses.

- 6 cups water
- 1 6-inch piece of kombu (kelp)

- 2 packets bonito flakes (katsuobushi)
- 12 ounces firm tofu, cut into half-inch cubes
- 1 strip wakame seaweed
- 6 shiitake mushrooms, stems discarded and sliced thinly
- 6 tablespoons white miso
- 4 scallions, minced

1. In a large pot, boil water. Add kombu and bonito flakes and boil for 8 minutes.
2. Remove kombu and strain the bonito flakes, so you're left with clear broth.
3. In the same pot with the clear broth, add cubed tofu, wakame, shiitake mushrooms and cook on medium-high heat for a few minutes.
4. In a small bowl, dissolve the miso paste in a small amount of hot water until creamy, then add the mixture to the soup and cook on low for 3 minutes. Garnish with scallions.

Chef Karolina's Raw Chocolate Truffles

Dessert can taste decadent without sabotaging your diet or your health. The perfect craving-busters, these one-bite wonders are a sweet, soothing summer treat (no oven required!) or can be dressed up for holiday parties.

- 1 cup raw cacao powder
- 1 cup raw cashews or macadamia nuts
- 1/2 cup real maple syrup

- Water (to mix)
- Shredded unsweetened coconut, chopped nuts, chocolate nibs, raw sugar, cacao powder, ginger or something else you love (optional roll-in ingredients)

1. Mix cashews in a food processor until it forms a powder, slowly adding enough water to create a thick paste.
2. Add maple syrup to cashews and pulse to process. Add cacao powder and pulse to process.
3. Refrigerate four hours or overnight for best results.
4. Form teaspoon-size balls of dough. Coat them in your chosen roll-in ingredients! Makes 25 truffles.

Banana Cashew-Vegan Ice Cream

This is the one time it’s okay to deceive your mother. Blending frozen bananas and cashew butter creates a creamy, sumptuous “ice cream” that doesn’t miss the dairy. Mom will have no clue it’s healthy and you get bonus points for making homemade dessert.

- 3 tablespoons cashew butter (no sugar added)
- 5 frozen bananas
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Pinch cinnamon
- Chopped cashews (optional topping)
- Coconut flakes (optional topping)
- Organic cacao nibs (optional topping)

1. Combine cashew butter, bananas, vanilla and cinnamon in a Vitamix and blend until creamy consistency. Serve topped with cashews, coconut flakes or cacao nibs.

You can pre-make ice cream and keep in freezer. Defrost 10 to

15 minutes before serving.

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4 Healthy Lunch Box Suggestions

It’s hard enough to get kids to eat healthy, especially at school when junk food or sugary snacks seem to magically sneak their way into the cafeteria. Try these easy, nutritious lunch box ideas that your kids will actually enjoy instead of toss in the trash.

1. Switch out the traditional unhealthy white bread sandwich for something a little more interesting. One of my favorites is a vegetarian bagel sandwich, which you can re-create each week with new toppings.

Bagel Sandwich

1 whole grain seeded bagel
¼ large ripe avocado, sliced
Pinch of sea salt
1 tablespoon sprouted sunflower seeds
¼ cup sprouts
4 thin slices cucumber

- Slice the bagel in thirds horizontally and save the middle slice for another use – smear with nut butter for your own mid-day snack. Bagels have ballooned in size over the years so the top and bottom part are plenty for a sandwich.
- Mash avocado into the bottom part of the bagel and sprinkle with sea salt, sunflower seeds and sprouts. Arrange the cucumber over the sprouts and

cap with the bagel top.
- Cut in half. Wrap well or store in a snug container.
- *This is best made in the morning before school to keep the bagel fresh and soft, not soggy.*

2. Innovate classics, like PB&J, with ingredients that are so yummy, your kids won't know they're good for them. My Nut-Butter Pinwheels, for example, get their sweetness from apples and honey, not sugar-laden jelly, and the nuttiness from natural nut butters. The roll-up lavash makes them a fun finger food.

Nut-Butter Pinwheels

1 whole wheat lavash
2 tablespoons unsweetened almond, peanut or pumpkin seed butter
¼ cup apple, chopped and unpeeled
1 teaspoon honey
2 teaspoons unsweetened granola (optional)

- Cut the lavash in half crosswise and spread both halves with the nut butter. Drizzle with honey and top with apple and granola.
- With the shorter edge of the lavash toward you roll up into a wrap. Do the same with the second half and cut each roll into four pinwheels.
- Store in snug container or reassemble each half and wrap in parchment paper.
- *This can be made a day ahead, but it's really best made in morning before school.*

3. Add a side of veggie sticks. Adding one cup of veggies to meals will help prevent the blood-sugar swings that may make them feel tired and cloud their thinking mid-day. By adding zucchini, celery, carrots and cucumbers to their snack bags, your child can benefit from more energy and better focus. If they can't bear to eat "plain" veggie sticks, add a tablespoon

of hummus for dipping.

4. Surprise them with blueberries for dessert. These berries soothe their sweet tooth while boosting their brain power at the same time. The bold color of this fruit comes from anthocyanins, antioxidants that studies have shown activate brain neurons. A recent report from Tufts University suggests that 1 cup of blueberries can increase brain energy by approximately 45 percent. Your kids can enjoy them fresh, dried or frozen all school year long.

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8 Fast, Easy Snacks for On-the-Go

When your schedule gets hectic, it's tempting to reach for the vending machine or whatever's nearby to satisfy your hunger, but that's often the worst thing you can do. My rule for snacks is combine protein with carbs to help manage blood sugar levels, and to avoid dairy.

Here is a round up of portable healthy snacks that feed your hunger, not your waistline:

1. Raw nuts mix. Whether store-bought or homemade, a nut mix that includes raw varieties is better than roasted ones, which lowers the nutrients. Make a batch on Sunday and store them in the refrigerator for the week. If you have a sweet tooth, add dried, unsweetened fruit. If your palate leans to savory, sprinkle with spices like rosemary or cayenne.

2. Mason jar dips. You know those glass containers you're saving when you clean out your kitchen (see "9 Ways to Get Organized for Fall")? Fill the bottom with two tablespoons of

nut or seed butters or all-natural hummus, then add vegetable sticks, like carrots, celery, zucchini, jicama or peppers. Pop on the top and you're ready to go.

3. Smoothies to go. On Sunday night, make twice your normal amount of breakfast smoothie. Pour the drink into 8-ounce glass jars and freeze. Store them in the fridge at the office and by the time you're ready to drink, it's thawed.

4. Seasoned kale chips. If you're the domestic type, making these at home is a cinch, or if you haven't used your oven in years, don't worry, store-bought varieties can be just as healthy. To make, trim kale stems, make sure they're completely dry and sprinkle with your favorite seasoning. Personally, sea salt does the trick for our family. Bake at 275 degrees for 20 minutes, or until crisp and dry.

5. Homemade granola bars. Often I'll read snack bar recipes that sound a lot like candy bars, but when made with the right ingredients, you'll have a energy powerhouse that will get you through an afternoon. Most granola bar recipes, especially the raw ones, take less than a half an hour to make and can last your family a week. Even better, they're highly portable and don't require refrigeration. I love this one from Food 52. The biggest challenge you'll have making these is keeping up with the demand.

6. two-ingredient bites. I love pairing two ingredients – sweet and savory or sweet and salty – for an easy quick fix that satisfies hunger and sugar cravings. My favorite combinations:

- organic dates stuffed with almond butter
- sliced green apple with nut butter
- organic brown rice cakes drizzled with brown rice syrup.

7. Salty crunches. On afternoons when stress is high and time is short, the only thing that does the trick are snacks with

crunch. I love:

- *roasted chickpeas*. Drizzle in olive oil and toss with your favorite ground spices, then bake 30 to 40 minutes at 400 degrees. If you buy them pre-made, read the nutrition label to know what you're getting.
- a handful (5 to 8) of *whole-grain or sprouted chips*, such as Garden of Eatin' brand, with freshly made salsa, pico de gallo or guacamole.
- *hummus and baby carrots or celery sticks*. Note: read the nutrition label on hummus to be sure the brand contains no preservatives or additives.
- *nori chips*. Cut these seaweed sheets into strips, drizzle with olive oil and top with seasonings. Bake for 20 minutes or until crispy. If you've got more time, create mini "sushi" bites with leftover brown rice or quinoa and vegetable sticks, no refrigeration required.

8. Healthy pudding. Chia seeds aren't just for smoothies anymore. Make them into a creamy and sweet (or savory, depending on your add-ins) treat in minutes with this delicious and highly addictive pudding recipe:

Chia Pudding:

- 3 tablespoons chia seeds
- ¾ cup unsweetened almond milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- Liquid stevia to taste (optional)
- Add cocoa powder or pumpkin pie spice for flavor

Combine all ingredients and let sit for 10 minutes stirring occasionally.

Cauliflower Hummus

This hummus is easy to make and tastes delicious. Enjoy with fresh cut veggies and toasted whole wheat pita bread.

- 1 cauliflower
- 2 tablespoons tahini
- 1/4 cup of extra virgin olive oil
- juice of 1 lemon
- handful parsely
- pinch cumin
- pinch sea salt
- Freshly ground pepper

Steam the cauliflower for approximately 10 minutes. Add the cauliflower to the food processor with all other ingredients and mix.

Ronit’s Twist on Dos Caminos Traditional Guacamole

Many New Yorkers love the guacamole served at Dos Caminos. The best tip I got from their traditional recipe is to mash the seasonings with the lime together and let the juices develop before I add in the avocados. My family and friends love my guacamole with more of a kick, so I add a bit more jalapeños and I leave the membranes and seeds. To keep your waistline trim, serve with platter of raw vegetables instead of the traditional tortilla chips.

- 3 tablespoons cilantro leaves, finely chopped
- 2 teaspoons jalapeño chilies, minced (remove seeds and membranes for less kick)
- ½ teaspoon Himalayan or sea salt
- 2 large ripe avocados, preferably Haas, peeled and seeded
- 1 small plum tomato, cored, seeded and finely chopped
- 2 teaspoons freshly squeezed lime juice

In a medium-size bowl, use a masher to mash together the cilantro, jalapeño, salt and lime juice. Let stand for a few minutes.

Add avocados and gently mash them with a fork. Stir in the chopped tomato.

Taste to adjust seasonings (typically I add more salt, more lime, more cilantro).

Serve with a platter of fresh cut veggies.

Ronit’s Fruity Green Juice for Kids

This juice is great for kids or anyone new to green juices. I adapted this recipe from Reboot With Joe and it’s a hit!

- 15 strawberries
- 1 apple
- 1 pear
- 12 kale leaves
- 4 celery stalks

Wash all ingredients well and put through a juicer.

Enjoy!