

Halloween here isn't about pumpkins... apple spiced muffin recipe

I've been involved in a bit of facebook rant recently about Halloween and the fact that Scottish kids celebrate this as the American version (trick or treat) rather than holding onto the traditional Scottish celebrations I knew as a kid. It's just one of those things, the world is becoming smaller with the advent of communications technologies. We grow up with American, Hollywood films and TV shows regularly come from the states, so it's only natural that there is a crossover of cultures. So I suppose that's where bloggers like myself have to talk about our cultural traditions so they don't get forgotten.

Pumpkin

Pumpkin is everywhere at this time of year... now. It wasn't a thing really when I was a kid, but these days Halloween and Autumn, in general, are filled with pumpkin. We have pumpkin decorations in the shops and pumpkin spiced coffees in the coffee shops etc. Here in Scotland, the tradition at Halloween was to carve a turnip. Yep, a turnip and it was bloody hard work, really only adults had any chance. We also had a few other traditions which I loved.

Dookin for apples



Pic from <https://www.glasgowlive.co.uk/news/glasgow-news/glasgow-school-children-take-part-12106270>

Dookin for apples was simply lots of apples bobbing in a big tub of water, which you had to catch with only your mouth – hands behind your back. There was much hilarity and soggy kids. We also ate apples coated in toffee with a stick stuck into them to hold, a bit like a lollipop.

Treacle Scones



Pic from <https://www.scotsman.com/news/how-scotland-celebrated-halloween-in-7-pictures-1-4272133>

I have to tell you about treacle scones just for my baby sister Leigh (who turned 41 a couple of days ago – happy birthday Leigh! The game of treacle scones is basically, bits of scone, covered in black treacle, hanging from strings across the room (so they swing) and kids, again with hands behind their backs have to bite the scones. Imagine treacle all over your face, in your hair, on your clothes etc... My sister had long, thick curly hair and she was always a complete mess but the end of the game (it didn't help that I worked out that I could nudge the scones just right so they'd swing right at her).

Guising

Lastly, in Scotland we go guising, not trick or treating. We made our costumes and go out prepared to “do a party piece” to earn our sweets. It could be you tell a joke, sing a song, show off your dance moves... or if you are my little brother, Arlen, tell an adorable cute poem when you are 3 – completely set up by myself and Leigh cause his cuteness got us extra sweets... We coached him well!

Anyways.... enough of my rant, you came here for a recipe..

Spiced Apple muffins (not pumpkin) for a warm autumn night treat

Ingredients for 12 large muffins

- 500g plain flour
- 3 tsp baking powder
- 2 tsp cinnamon
- 0.5 tsp nutmeg
- 1 tsp cardamom
- 1 tsp ginger powder
- 2 eggs
- 150g granulated sugar
- 180ml oil
- 150ml milk
- 400g jar of Bramley apple sauce (with chunks of apple in)

I am being completely lazy and using a jar of apple sauce, but feel free to use your own homemade sauce it will probably be sooooo much better.

Get Baking



Step 1. First, preheat your oven to 170 C for a fan oven or 190 C for a conventional oven & then prepare your muffin tin – if you aren't using muffin wrappers as I do (see above), oil your tin.

Step 2. In a bowl, combine all your wet ingredients and sugar and then give it, really good mix to break up the egg and combine the egg and oil. Then add your applesauce and mix it through.

Step 3. Sift the flour, spices and baking powder into a big bowl and give it a good mix.

Step 4. Pour your wet into your dry, give it enough of a mix

to combine but don't over mix. How to know it's right, it should drop thickly and easily off a spoon. Baking can add more milk if it's too thick and a little flour if it's too runny.

Step 5. Add the batter to the muffin wrappers. They should be NO MORE than three-quarters full. Do not overfill, trust me, as they will rise heaps in the oven.

Step 6. As quickly as you can, get them in the oven and bake for 30 to 35 mins, until they are golden brown on top.

Step 7. Let them cool and then nom!

Cheese muffins – savoury treats that you will love

If you are a regular follower of my blog, you'll know that I am a complete muffin feind. I can't help it, I love eating fluffy muffins and I love baking them too.

One of the things which always surprises me though is the lack of savoury muffins on offer out there.

So to rectify this heinous crime, I'm sharing my fabulous cheesy muffin recipe. They are fantastic with soup instead of bread and they are just as nommy on their own.

Word of warning, I don't make piddly little cupcake type muffins. This recipe will give you 12 proper big American

muffins.

Eli's cheese muffins

You will need a muffin tin to make these. The size means that they need the support of a muffin tin and wrapper to help them rise.

I use tulip wrappers which you can make yourself or buy in lots of colours. There's a great video showing you how to make them on youtube: https://youtu.be/buV_TaiMMwo

Ingredients

- 2 eggs
- 180 ml oil
- 360 ml milk
- 240 ml plain yogurt
- 4 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 450g plain flour
- 350g strong cheddar cheese
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 1 tsp dried thyme

Get baking

First thing to do is get your oven heating to 170C for a fan or 190C for a normal oven.

Then get your muffin wrappers into the tin ready to go. With the baking powder and soda in there, you don't want to be dilly dallying once you mix things. Once that stuff starts to react, you want to take advantage and let it make your muffins rise and get fluffy.

OK muffins are actually dead simple to make once you get the basics. It's as simple as wet into dry.

So in a bowl or jug, mix your wet ingredients. The milk, oil, egg and yogurt and into that mix the sugar.

In a separate bowl sift your flour. Salt, baking powder and baking soda to get it all mixed.

Grate your cheese into this and stir it through.

Now you are ready for the fun. Combine the wet into the dry and give it a good mix to create a thick batter. Don't worry about getting all the lumps out, this will sort itself in cooking.

Once it's all combined, get that batter split between your 12 muffin wrappers so that each is about half to three quarters full.

I found the best thing for doing this is a good old fashioned ice cream scoop. Makes things much quicker and less messy. For extra yum, grate some cheese on top before popping them in the oven for 35 mins and salivate at the awesome smell that will come from your kitchen.

Done, jobs a good 'un.

You want to "test" one while they are still warm, chef's prerogative.

