

NOTES FROM THE NUT

CAPAY HILLS ORCHARD NEWSLETTER ISSUE 39



IN THIS ISSUE: NOVEMBER - JANUARY 2024

- A New-Found Recipe!
- To Eat or Not to Eat?



CERTIFIED



A New-Found Recipe!



We have a delicious new recipe to share with you! Recently, we tried out a new muffin recipe shared by a friend, found out it contained almond butter, and also discovered it makes some of the best (tastiest and healthiest) muffins ever! It may have pumpkin in it, but we think this is definitely an all-season recipe keeper! Following is the recipe, and we will wrap up with our own personal notes on it.

Prep notes:

Servings: 12 regular muffins

Oven temperature: 350 degrees Fahrenheit

Prep time + Cook time = Total time: 10 minutes + 14 minutes = 24 minutes

Ingredients:

- 3 eggs
- ¾ cup almond butter
- ¼ cup maple syrup
- ½ cup pumpkin puree
- 3 tablespoons neutral oil (such as canola or avocado)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ¼ cup whole-wheat flour
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
- 1½ teaspoons baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon baking soda



All but Kyle and his family were home for Christmas!

Preheat oven and grease a muffin tin with nonstick spray or add paper-type or silicon liners. Gather all ingredients. Add all ingredients to a blender and blend well. OR add to a large bowl and whisk well to thoroughly combine the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients.

Spoon the batter into muffin tins. (Be sure to grease the tin well with nonstick cooking spray.)

Bake until golden brown and firm to the touch. Remove from the oven and let cool on a wire rack.

Personal Notes:

We love this recipe! Here are some of the changes we make, depending on ingredients on hand or the desire at the time:

- Combination of various spices normally found in pumpkin pie spice, such as cloves, ginger, fresh nutmeg, and allspice
- Einkorn flour instead of regular whole wheat. Einkorn is a more ancestral, unmodified wheat that is more nutritious than modern wheats and contains a different kind of gluten that is easier to digest (many gluten-free diets can still include Einkorn flour).
- Avocado oil for the choice of oil
- We used farm fresh, free-range eggs
- We used honey instead of maple syrup since we always have local honey on hand
- And of course, Capay Hills Orchard raw, organic almond butter!

The muffins turn out very moist and light and are chock-full of nutrients and healthy fats and proteins! It's a great breakfast addition or a snack whenever it's needed! Kids and adults both love them and it has become a favorite recipe of ours!

*Please visit <https://www.yummytoddlerfood.com/pumpkin-almond-butter-mini-muffins/> to view the whole recipe.





To Eat or Not to Eat?



Recently a rather intriguing topic was brought up to us concerning the health of almonds, and more specifically, their consumption as a source of essential omega-6 polyunsaturated fatty acids. Omega-6 fatty acids have been vilified for a supposed connection with cardiovascular disease in recent years. We dove into this issue and found multiple encouraging and very enlightening articles, which all propose a simply answer and solution: Omega-6 fatty acids (which almonds are a good source of) are not linked to cardiovascular disease if consumed in moderation from whole, unprocessed food sources. Let's talk about this a little more.

In the past several decades, consumption of omega-6 fatty acids has skyrocketed. In tandem with this increased consumption has been cardiovascular disease, in addition to other chronic diseases such as cancer and diabetes. Witnessing this led many to a conclusion that the two must be positively related. To state things in an over-simplified manner, they are indeed related. However, there is much more information behind what seems obvious that serves to disqualify this easily-made statement.

Countless researchers have found that omega-6 fatty acids, when consumed in moderation from whole, unprocessed food sources and especially when consumed alongside the proper amount of omega-3 fatty acids, actually REDUCE the risk of cardiovascular disease, cancers, and diabetes. Our almonds fit right into that! So then why the fuss? Well, omega-6 fatty acids *do* become a health problem when they are consumed via *industrial seed and vegetable oils*. Unfortunately, for the average American (or even most people in more developed countries), this is the primary source. Industrial seed oils and vegetable oils (canola, sunflower, corn, soy) are in almost every processed food we eat, from seaweed snack packages (which sound really healthy, right?) to our baked goods and salad dressings. This form of omega-6 fatty acids is especially problematic because of their high prevalence in two primary places:

1. These oils are found frequently in drive-thru and sit-down restaurants for deep-frying purposes. Almost without exception, this oil is used and re-used for at least several days. This constant re-heating of the same oil allows it to oxidize. This overheated, rancid oil contains numerous negative changes to the chemistry of the oil, including degrading the quality and strength of Vitamin E (a vitamin almonds are high in). Vitamin E is an antioxidant, meaning it protects fatty acids from lipid oxidation.

2. The other problem with these vegetable and seed oils has to do with their method of extraction. Virtually all vegetable and seed oils must be produced through heat (which degrades Vitamin E, resulting in a level of oxidation) and/or through the addition of hexane (which is later evaporated out). Hexane is a hydrocarbon, found in the same family as diesel fuel and gasoline. Trace amounts of this will remain after the evaporation process.

So are you concerned about your intake of omega-6? The answer is simple, though it may be hard to break old habits of eating: eat whole, unprocessed foods that contain omega-6 and ones that contain omega-3. Remove vegetable and seed oils from your diet. Most articles we found recommended eating foods like fatty fish and almonds as they contain the exact nutrients needed for a healthy omega-6 diet. Raw almonds, since they are a good source of intact Vitamin E and magnesium, actually work to *prevent* lipid oxidation, lipid oxidation being the very problem linked to omega-6-rich diets that cause Americans' countless health problems.

In short, it is easiest to remember that it is far cheaper to pay the farmer than it is to pay the doctor. Plus, you don't have to worry about hassles insurance while you're dealing with health issues!

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