

Sourdough Chocolate-Walnut Muffins

Recipe 214 of 365

When our friend Amy sent me a sourdough starter, she also sent an old-fashioned recipe booklet with ideas that extended well beyond the cursory sourdough biscuits and breads. A mutual friend asked for a chocolate muffin recipe for Amy's birthday, and it seemed appropriate to come up with an adaptation of the sourdough chocolate cake recipe I'd noticed in the booklet. But when I opened it up to start cooking, it turned out that the instructions (as well as part of the ingredients list) had been lopped off the page . . .but alas, a little creativity goes a long way.

Enjoy these plain (they're best hot), or let cool and top with your favorite frosting.

You will need a cup of sourdough starter for this recipe – it makes the muffins taste a tiny bit tangy, as though they've been made with sour cream.

TIME: 30 minutes active time

MAKES: About 22 muffins

Butter or spray vegetable oil for greasing muffin tins, or muffin liners

2 cups all-purpose flour

1/2 cup cocoa powder

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda

1/2 teaspoon salt

3/4 cup (1 1/2 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature

1 1/2 cups sugar

3 large eggs

1 cup sourdough starter

1 teaspoon vanilla

3/4 cup milk

4 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped and melted

1 1/2 cups chopped walnuts (optional)

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Grease or line 2 trays of muffin tins, and set aside.

Whisk the flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, soda, and salt together in a medium bowl, and set aside.

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream the butter with the sugar on medium speed until light, about 3 minutes. Add the eggs, one at a time, mixing to blend between each addition and scraping down the sides of the bowl when necessary. Add the starter and the vanilla and mix to blend. (The batter may look a little lumpy; that's okay.)

With the mixer on low, add half the dry ingredients, then the milk, then the remaining dry ingredients. Scrape the bottom and sides of the bowl again, if necessary. Increase speed to medium and pour the melted chocolate into the batter as it mixes, whipping until completely incorporated.

Fill the muffin cups with 1/4 cup batter each (you should get not quite two full pans of muffins), sprinkle the tops with a heavy layer of the walnuts, and bake for 20 minutes, rotating the muffins top to bottom and back to front a little more than halfway through baking. Muffins are done when puffed and a toothpick inserted into the center of one comes out clean.

Let muffins cool 10 minutes in pans, then transfer to racks to cool completely. (Always cool before frosting.) Muffins may be cooled and stored in an airtight container at room temperature up to 3 days.