

Almond Topped Chocolate Chip Muffins
From The Cook's Life
Makes 12 muffins

Muffins:

1½ cups buttermilk
1 cup oats, quick or old-fashioned
¼ cup oil
1 egg
⅓ cup sugar
1 teaspoon almond extract
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
½ cup white whole wheat flour (or all-purpose flour)
¾ cup all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon baking soda
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 cup semi-sweet or dark chocolate chips

Topping:

¼ cup sliced almonds
¼ cup rolled oats, quick or old-fashioned
3 tablespoons sugar
2 tablespoons butter

Mix the buttermilk and oats together in a large bowl and set aside while you gather your ingredients and make the topping.

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Lightly grease 12 standard muffin cups and set aside.

Make the topping:

Use a food processor, mini chopper or a pastry blender to mix together the almonds, oats and granulated sugar. When the mixture is fairly finely ground, with the almonds mostly broken up, add the butter and mix until everything starts to clump together slightly and looks like coarse wet sand. Refrigerate topping while you mix the muffins.

Add the oil, egg, sugar, almond extract and vanilla extract to the oat and buttermilk mixture. Mix well.

Mix the whole wheat flour, all-purpose flour, salt, baking soda and baking powder together in a small bowl. Add to oat mixture and stir gently. Do not beat or you will end up with tough muffins. When the flour is almost completely mixed in, add the chocolate chips and stir until there are no streaks or pockets of dry flour.

Divide batter evenly among the greased muffin cups, which will be almost full. Use a measuring tablespoon to divide the topping between the muffins, using about 1 tablespoon per muffin. Keep most of the topping toward the middle of each muffin. If the topping is compacted into mounds, use your finger to break them up slightly.

Bake the muffins for 13-15 minutes, or until tops are golden brown and bounce back when touched lightly. A toothpick inserted in the middle of a muffin will come out with just a few moist crumbs, if you can manage to miss the chocolate chips.

Let muffins cool in the pan for about 10 minutes to firm up a bit. Then remove them from the pan to finish cooling on a wire rack. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Store at room temperature in an airtight container for up to two days. After that the muffins will start to get dry. Freeze for longer storage. Thaw at room temperature for a few hours, or in the microwave for about 20 seconds per muffin.