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EXTENSION**

# Family Matters

*Improving Health Together*

## March 2024 Newsletter

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## Get Out the Muffin Pan and Get the Family in the Kitchen

By Sheila Gains, Family and Consumer Science Specialist, Arapahoe County

Any time of year is a great time to become more creative in the kitchen, while involving the whole family. For inspiration, get your muffin pans out from the back of the cupboard and invite your family to brainstorm what foods they could make in a muffin pan. As yummy as they are, don't limit your ideas to just sweet muffin flavors. I'm sure you can come up with ideas for any meal or snack.



### Baking Foods in a Muffin Pan has Many Advantages:

- Portion sizes are controlled by the size of the muffin pan cups. For example, use a pan with mini size cups for desserts or snacks, and a pan with standard or larger size cups for main dishes.
- Variety and customization in each muffin cup are fun and easy ways to get everyone involved. For example, each person can add what they want into the one or two cups assigned to them.

- Foods cook quickly in individual cups as compared to one large pan of the same ingredients.

- If you like the crispy edges of a pan of brownies or casserole, muffin pans yield a higher percentage of edges than a larger pan.

- Many foods cooked in a muffin pan can be eaten with your hands. This makes them convenient to take on a picnic, road trip or activity filled day.

Muffin pan foods are easy to freeze as individual portions, and quick to reheat



## Let's Talk

People, especially children, are more likely to eat and enjoy foods they have helped prepare. Involving children also teaches food preparation skills. Explain to children that learning how to cook is a skill that will help them, save money, and feed themselves when they get older. Cooking together increases the opportunity for positive conversations about food.



### Foods that Can Easily be Baked in a Muffin Pan:

- Crustless Mini Quiche or [Scrambled Egg Muffin](#). Each person chooses from vegetable and cheese options to add to a greased or foil lined muffin cup, then cover ingredients with your favorite quiche (egg and milk) mixture before baking. A recipe can be found at Family Matters Newsletter - March 2019(colostate.edu)
- Mini Meatloaves. Using your favorite meatloaf recipe, divide the mixture among the greased muffin pan cups. Each family member can top theirs with ketchup, barbeque, salsa, or sauce of their choosing before baking.
- [Morning Muffins](#). These include both grated or diced fruits and vegetables of your choosing, in a lightly sweetened batter. A recipe can be found at Family Matters Newsletter - March 2018 - Extension (colostate.edu)
- French Toast Cups. Place bread cubes in greased muffin pan cups and cover with an egg and milk custard before baking. When done, the topping ideas are endless.
- Baked Shells – Line greased muffin cups with a small tortilla (flour or corn), egg roll wrapper, or piece of phyllo dough and bake until lightly brown and crisp. Fill shells with a variety of fillings.
- Pizza or Focaccia Bites. Start by pressing a small piece of pizza dough into each greased muffin cup. Use enough dough to cover the bottom and come up the sides by ½ inch. Brush dough with pizza sauce or olive oil. Let each family member pick from a variety of toppings before baking at 400 degrees for 10-12 minutes.
- Tamale Casserole. Make with cornbread/masa batter layered with traditional spiced meat fillings of your liking and bake. These are a little messier than other ideas and would benefit from using silicon or foil liners in the muffin cup for easier removal.
- Baked Mac and Cheese Cups. Just like it sounds, bake your favorite macaroni and cheese mixture, with any custom additions, in a greased muffin pan.
- [Banana Oat Muffins](#) – These are a great way to use up overripe bananas. A recipe can be found at Family MattersNewsletter - April 2017 - Extension (colostate.edu)



**Busy families, picky eaters, and dietary restrictions are common stressors when preparing family meals. This stress can be lessened when family members help with decision making and food preparation.**

