

Corn and Blueberry Muffins with Lemon Sugar

Time: 10 minutes to put together, about 30 minutes to bake

Corn, blueberries, yogurt, lemon, liftoff. This muffin has it all—a compelling synergy of flavors and a moist, rustic, velvety crumb. And blueberries, of course—tons of them. With yogurt as the sole liquid agent, the density of the batter keeps the blueberries from drifting to the bottom of the cups. An après-oven dip in melted butter and lemon sugar makes these muffins extravagantly good. They're still great the second day, but who wants to wait around and find out?

Equipment Mise en Place

For this recipe you will need a large, bakery-size 6-muffin tin (or smaller 12-cup tin), a small saucepan, a medium mixing bowl, a large mixing bowl, a whisk, a rubber spatula, and a cooling rack.

Ingredients

Vegetable oil spray or softened butter

8 tablespoons unsalted butter

1 1/2 to 1 3/4 cups (9.5 to 11.25 ounces) granulated sugar (see Baking Notes)

1 large egg

1 cup (9 ounces) plain yogurt

1 cup (5 ounces) Anson Mills Fine White or Yellow Cornmeal

1 1/4 cups (6.25 ounces) unbleached all-purpose flour

1 tablespoon baking powder

3/4 teaspoon fine sea salt

2 cups fresh ripe or 10 ounces frozen blueberries

Finely grated peel of 1 lemon

Directions

1. Adjust an oven rack to the middle position and heat the oven to 425 degrees. Grease a large, bakery-size 6-muffin tin or smaller 12-cup tin with vegetable oil spray or butter and set aside.
2. Heat the butter in a small saucepan over low heat until it melts. Spoon off 4 tablespoons and set aside in a small bowl. Pour the remaining butter into a medium mixing bowl. Whisk in 1 cup sugar, the egg, and the yogurt. Set aside.

Baking Notes

Fresh, ripe, in-season blueberries are the obvious choice for these muffins. But if the only fresh berries you can find are the wincingly tart kind, stick to frozen (small, wild, frozen blueberries, if possible). Stir them into the batter while they're still frozen and expect the muffins to need 4 or 5 minutes longer in the oven.

Using 1 cup of sugar for the batter and the other 1/2 cup for the lemon-sugar topping creates a sweet-tart balance between the blueberries, the batter, and the topping. If you like things sweet, increase the sugar in the batter to 1 1/4 cups.

Nonstick muffin tins will toughen the crust on these (or any) muffins. Simple, old-fashioned uncoated steel is the best material for heat conduction and crisping.

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- 3.** Turn the cornmeal, flour, baking powder, and salt into a large mixing bowl and whisk to combine. Toss the blueberries into the flour to coat evenly.

- 4.** Pour the wet ingredients into the dry and fold gently to combine. The batter will be quite thick—like a cookie dough. Do not overwork. Scoop or spoon the batter evenly into the prepared tin. Bake until the muffins are nicely risen and brown around the edges, and test clean with a toothpick, 20 to 25 minutes, rotating the pan from front to back halfway through baking and lowering the oven heat to 375 degrees. (Muffins baked in smaller tins will finish in about 15 minutes—watch the heat and lower the oven temperature if they are browning too quickly.)

- 5.** While the muffins are baking, mash the lemon zest into the remaining sugar with a fork or your fingertips. Rewarm the reserved butter if it has solidified.

- 6.** Remove the muffins from the oven and cool them in the tin for 5 minutes. Lift them out and stand them upright on a rack. Cool 15 minutes. Working one muffin at a time, dip the muffin tops in the melted butter and then into the sugar.

Makes 6 large muffins