

THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

DARK CHOCOLATE ZUCCHINI BREAD



When you're new to cooking the thought of getting creative in the kitchen can seem out of reach. Holding close to the recipe is often the goal for cooking beginners so the techniques are learned and the outcome is expected. Yet, even when you're new there are areas to get creative. Baking for one.

Yes, there are ingredient substitutions that can replace butter, oils, or eggs but the creativity comes in the form of the extras inside your baked dish. Added nuts to muffins or breads that can increase the healthy fats and protein. Fruit can add sweetness to these dishes enabling you to decrease the amount of added sugar, but not completely, sugar does play a structural role in baking.

Some might use bananas that have been kept too long to make banana bread, reducing food waste. Switch out the white flour for wheat flour, add a little cocoa powder, and some nuts and now you have a punched up, heartier bread you can enjoy for dessert in lieu of other higher calorie and less nutritious options. You can also use avocado to replace unhealthy fat with healthy fat and yogurt to increase the protein.

This week, take it one step further and plan to use zucchinis with your pureed bananas that will now be used as a substitute for some sugar and fat. The wonder of zucchini bread is that the zucchinis take on the flavor of what's around it. In this case, it's the chocolate. This dish is a hearty and rich version of the one you might have grown up with at school bake sales with the added benefit of helping you meet your 8 daily servings of fruits and vegetables. Who would have thought adding vegetables to your dessert could be so tasty and easy?

MACROS / SERVING SIZE:

Protein 7 g | Fat 11 g | Carbs 30 g

% CALORIES OF MACROS / SERVING SIZE:

Calories 242 | Protein 12 % | Fat 41 % | Carbs 47 %

NUTRIENT / SERVING SIZE:

Fiber 4 g | Sodium 383 mg | Sat. Fat 2 g

DIETITIAN TIP

When baking, consider replacing butter, shortening or oil with the healthy fat from an avocado at a 1:1 ratio or 1/2 the sugar with pureed fruit.

INGREDIENTS (Serves 10)

- 1 cup of mashed avocado pulp (about 2 medium-sized avocados)
- 2 large eggs
- ½ cup mashed over-ripe banana
- ¼ cup of brown sugar (optional)
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 2 oz. semi-sweet baking chocolate squares, melted
- 2 cups zucchini, grated
- ½ cup plain Greek yogurt
- 2 cups flour
- 3 tbsp. cocoa powder
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- ¾ cup chopped walnuts

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.
2. Lightly grease a 9"x5" loaf pan. Lightly dust with flour and then set aside.
3. Place the mashed avocado and banana in a bowl and beat, using a hand whisk or electric mixer (set on low), until ingredients are blended and mostly smooth.
4. Add the sugar to the bowl and mix until combined and then add the eggs, one at a time, and mix well in between each egg.
5. Add the vanilla, melted chocolate and zucchini. Mix until incorporated, while using a folding motion.
6. In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour, cocoa powder, salt and baking soda. Add half of the dry ingredients to the wet mixture, followed by the Greek yogurt, and then finish by adding the remaining dry ingredients. Once fully combined, fold in the chopped walnuts. Be careful to only do this just enough to incorporate the nuts. Over mixing will result in a coarse textured loaf.
7. Pour the batter into the prepared loaf pan. Bake for about 70 to 75 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool in the pan for at least 30 minutes and then remove the loaf from the pan. Cool the loaf completely on a wire rack.
8. When ready, slice 10 equal pieces and enjoy!



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