



Grains of truth about ENGLISH MUFFINS

Definitions

English muffins are flat rounds of yeast-raised rolls that are produced in much the same way as the English crumpet. The muffins should be chewy, with light air pockets.

Simply called “muffins” in Europe, English muffins used to be cooked on gigantic griddles that were covered with engravings. Today, they are cooked quickly on the hot surface of a griddle and require very little fat. They are a good choice for a fast, hot breakfast bread and make a wonderful snack at lunch. They are a marvelous companion to peanut butter, fresh fruits and berries all year.

An English muffin is a true English muffin only when it is torn apart to be toasted. Never cut it with a knife. It should be pulled apart and laid open to reveal an interesting array of irregular air pockets. Part of the enjoyment of English muffins comes from toasting the rough peaks and valleys to various degrees of golden brown.

History

The origin of English muffins is not clear, but at least one of the antecedents may have been “Bara Maen,” a yeast leavened cake baked on hot stones in 10th century Wales. A similar cake or muffin baked on griddles was popular in 19th century England. The hot fresh muffins were peddled door to door in the early morning, hence the “muffin man.”

Most sources attribute the introduction in America of what is today called the “English muffin” to S.B. Thomas. The young Samuel Bath Thomas was familiar with these muffins and their recipe before he moved to America from Plymouth, England, in 1875. By 1880, he had saved enough money to open a shop of his own in Manhattan and the rest is history.



Availability

The modern “English” muffin has evolved into a truly American product, available in a wide variety of flavors, textures, whole grains and with additions of raisins, blueberries and other specialty ingredients.

The availability of English muffins is wide. They are sold in supermarkets and convenience stores, as well as being listed on most menus at your favorite restaurant or deli.

Storage

English muffins may be refrigerated for up to 30 days and kept frozen in an airtight container for 6 months.

Nutritional value

English muffins are low in fat and high in complex carbohydrates. The standard **2-ounce** muffin equals **two servings** from the grain group on the Food Guide Pyramid.

One plain muffin (57g), (two servings) contains approximately:

134 calories	2 g fat
4 g protein	0 mg cholesterol
26 g carbohydrates	21 mcg folate
2 g fiber	99 mg calcium
75 mg potassium	264 mg sodium

Serving ideas

Muffins can be eaten fresh or lightly toasted. Use caution if heating in a microwave as the muffins toughen.

For breakfast:

- ◆ Mix no-fat cream cheese and apple butter or strawberry jam and spread on a warm muffin.

- ◆ Jelly with or without peanut butter.
- ◆ Melt low-fat cheese over an English muffin.
- ◆ Place a poached egg on one half of a muffin and top with salsa.
- ◆ Top with cinnamon and sugar and toast under broiler until brown. Butter is optional.

For lunch:

- ◆ Shrimp or crab salad on a toasted muffin, topped with melted mozzarella cheese.
- ◆ Use a toasted English muffin as a bun for your favorite sandwich.

For dinner:

- ◆ Toasted with garlic or herb butter.
- ◆ Spread with feta cheese, sun-dried tomatoes and sprinkle with sweet basil. Broil for 3 to 5 minutes in oven.
- ◆ Left-over tuna salad? Spread on muffin, sprinkle with cheese and broil for 2 to 3 minutes.
- ◆ Spread with pizza/spaghetti sauce and mozzarella cheese, salt, pepper and garlic powder to taste. Broil 2 to 3 minutes. Cut into bite-sized pieces.

Recipes

Crab & Cream Cheese Spread

- 8 ounces no-fat cream cheese softened**
- 1 cup low-fat mozzarella cheese**
- 1 teaspoon chopped onion**
- 1 teaspoon mustard**
- 1 teaspoon horseradish**
- 1/3 cup sweet pickle relish**
- 1/2 cup sweet red pepper, diced**
- 7 ounce can flaked crabmeat**
- 6 English muffins (plain or whole wheat)**

Mix together cream cheese and mozzarella cheese; add onion, mustard, horseradish, sweet pickle relish and sweet red pepper. Blend in crabmeat. Separate muffins into halves and top with the mixture. Broil for 1 to 2 minutes and serve. Makes 12 halves (1 serving)

Nutrient Analysis: One serving provides approximately: 136 calories, 11 g protein, 17 g carbohydrates, 1 g dietary fiber, 2 g fat (1 g saturated), 23 mg cholesterol, 10 mcg folate, 1 mg iron, 183 mg calcium, 129 mg potassium and 408 mg sodium.

Brie & Honey Spread

2 English muffins

8 ounce Brie wedge

1/4 cup honey, warmed

2 tablespoons toasted sliced almonds

Separate muffins into halves. Warm brie in microwave until it starts to melt. Spread the brie on the English muffin halves and drizzle with honey. Sprinkle almonds over honey. Cut the halves into quarters and serve immediately. Makes 8 servings (1 quarter)

Nutrient Analysis: One serving provides approximately: 181 calories, 8 g protein, 16 g carbohydrates, 1 g dietary fiber, 10 g fat (6 g saturated), 32 mg cholesterol, 33 mcg folate, 1 mg iron, 88 mg calcium, 84 mg potassium and 268 mg sodium.



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