



Picnic Season

Savoury Sun-Dried Tomato Muffins with Cream Cheese Filling

Carrot, beetroot, orange and seed salad

Everything seems to taste so much better in the fresh air! Living in Jamaica, I am lucky enough to have access to some beautiful picnic spots like Dunn's River Falls, a famous waterfall near Ocho Rios. These muffins could make an ideal companion for any picnic the salad. Just pop them in a bag and head outdoors.

Usain Bolt

Makes: **8 muffins**
Serves: **4**
Prep time: **30 minutes**
Cook time: **18 – 20 minutes**

Ingredients

For the muffins

- 225g self raising flour
- 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
- ¼ tsp salt
- 2 eggs
- 75ml light olive or rapeseed oil
- 150g natural yoghurt
- 75g sun-dried tomatoes in oil, drained (pat dry with kitchen paper and roughly chop)
- Small bunch of fresh basil or chives (roughly chopped)
- 75g grated Parmesan cheese
- 120g full fat cream cheese with chives or garlic and herbs

For the dressing

- 2 tbsp light olive or rapeseed oil
- 1 tbsp white wine vinegar
- 1 tsp wholegrain mustard
- 1 tsp honey
- 1 tbsp poppy seeds

For the salad

- 1 large orange
- Quarter of a small white cabbage (core and shred)
- 1 large carrot (trim and coarsely grate)
- 1 medium fresh beetroot (trim, peel and coarsely grate)
- 1 tbsp pumpkin seeds



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1 Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C Fan/ Gas Mark 6. Line 8 holes of a muffin tray with paper cases or non-stick baking paper (see tips). Put the **flour**, **bicarbonate of soda** and **salt** into a bowl. Put the **eggs**, **oil** and **yoghurt** into a jug and lightly whisk together.



2 Stir the **egg mixture** into the dry ingredients in the bowl and add the **tomatoes**, **chopped herb** and two-thirds of the **Parmesan**. Gently mix together until everything is just incorporated. Don't over mix as it will make the muffins tough.



3 Put a tablespoon of the mixture into the bottom of each muffin case. Place a teaspoon of the **cream cheese** into the centre of the muffin, then cover it completely with the remaining mixture. Sprinkle each muffin with the remaining **Parmesan**. Bake on the middle shelf of your oven for 18–20 mins until risen, golden brown and springy to the touch. Allow to cool.



4 Prepare the **salad**. Cut the peel and pith away from the **orange**. Use a small knife to remove the segments, cutting between the membrane and catching the juices in a large bowl, then squeeze any excess juice from the pith into the bowl as well.



5 Make the dressing. Stir the **oil**, **vinegar**, **mustard**, **honey** and **poppy seeds** into the **orange juice** and season well with **salt** and **pepper**. Add the **orange segments** to the bowl with the prepared **salad vegetables** and stir in the **pumpkin seeds**, mixing to combine. The **beetroot** will turn everything a pretty shade of pink!



6 Transfer the salad to a lidded container and wrap the muffins. Don't forget a spoon or fork for the salad and your picnic blanket!

Chef Usain's Winning Tips

It's easy to make your own paper cases! Take a square of non-stick baking paper and fold it over a glass or jar the same size as the muffin tin hole. Pop in the tin and fill with mixture.

Use a light oil of your choice. Rapeseed oil gives a lovely golden colour to the muffins, but always buy cold-pressed rapeseed if possible as it is less refined and retains many more essential nutrients.

The muffins are best eaten on the day they are made but will keep for 1–2 days in a cool place.

Beware, beetroot stains! Wear plastic gloves if you have them, to avoid staining your hands. Grate it straight into a bowl to prevent staining your chopping board.



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