

## Hot Cross Muffins

These fruit-laden muffins smell exactly like hot cross buns as they bake and taste just as satisfying, but with a fraction of the effort.

Makes 12 jumbo muffins (tulip cups) or 24 regular muffins

Prep Time: 20 minutes, plus setting

Cook Time: 30 minutes

2½ cups (375 g) all-purpose flour  
2 tsp baking powder  
1¼ tsp ground cinnamon  
½ tsp baking soda  
½ tsp ground allspice  
½ tsp ground nutmeg  
½ tsp ground cloves  
¼ tsp fine salt  
1 cup (200 g) granulated sugar  
1 cup (250 mL) 2% milk  
⅓ cup (160 mL) vegetable oil  
2 large eggs  
2 Tbsp (30 mL) honey  
Zest of 1 lemon  
1 Tbsp (15 mL) fresh lemon juice  
1½ cups (225 g) raisins or (240 g) currants  
½ cup (70 g) dried cranberries  
¼ cup (37 g) diced candied orange peel

Glaze:

1½ cups (200 g) icing sugar  
1½ Tbsp (22 mL) water  
½ tsp meringue powder (optional)

1. **Preheat the oven** to 375°F (190°C). Line a 12-cup muffin tin with extra-large paper liners (tulip cups) or line two tins with regular paper liners.

2. **Combine the dry ingredients.** Sift together the flour, baking powder, cinnamon, baking soda, allspice, nutmeg, cloves and salt in a large mixing bowl.

3. **Combine the liquids.** In a separate bowl, whisk the sugar, milk, oil, eggs, honey, lemon zest and juice together. Add all at once to the flour and whisk until well combined. Stir in the raisins (or currants), cranberries and candied peel.

Even though sugar might seem like a “dry” ingredient, in quick cakes it goes in with the liquids to

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dissolve so the batter is softer and easier to handle.

If you are not fond of candied peel, replace that measurement with extra raisins or cranberries.

4. **Divide the batter** evenly between the muffin cups.

5. **Bake the muffins** for 30 minutes for the extra-large muffins or 20 to 25 minutes for the regular-sized ones. Cool the muffins in their tins on a rack for 20 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack to cool completely before glazing.

6. **Make the glaze.** Whisk the icing sugar, water and meringue powder, if using, until smooth and the proper consistency for piping. To test the glaze, drizzle a little on a plate. If it spreads too much, add a little more icing sugar and whisk to combine. If it is too thick, loosen with a few droplets of water and whisk again. Spoon the glaze into a parchment paper cone and pipe a cross on the top of each muffin. Let the glaze set for an hour before serving.

The meringue powder helps the glaze set. If you make the glaze without it, let the muffins air-dry for an extra hour before storing them. And to make the muffins less seasonally specific, you can leave the crosses off or simply drizzle the glaze on top.

The muffins will keep in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 3 days.

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## MINI LEMON MERINGUE CHEESECAKE CUPCAKES

Lemon meringue pie meets cheesecake, and in little bites that make it hard to resist having just one. What a crowd pleaser!

Makes about 4 dozen mini cheesecake cupcakes

### Crust:

1 ½ cups            graham cracker crumbs  
1 1/2 tbsp            sugar  
1/4 cup            unsalted butter, melted

### Cheesecake

2                      8-oz/225 g packages cream cheese, room temperature  
2/3 cup            sugar  
2 Tbsp            cornstarch  
1 Tbsp            finely grated lemon zest  
2 Tbsp            fresh lemon juice  
2 tsp            vanilla extract  
2                    large eggs, room temperature

### Meringue:

2                      large egg whites, at room temperature  
1/4 tsp            fresh lemon juice  
5 Tbsp            sugar  
1 tsp            cornstarch

1. Preheat oven to 350°F and line 48 mini muffin tins with paper cups.
2. To make crust, combine all ingredients until evenly blended and crumbly. Press into bottom of mini muffins cups. Bake for 8 minutes, then cool.
3. To make cheesecake, reduce oven to 325°F. Beat cream cheese until smooth and fluffy, then gradually add sugar while beating, scraping the sides of the bowl often. Beat in cornstarch, lemon zest, lemon juice and vanilla. Add eggs one at a time, scraping well after each addition.
4. Spoon or pipe cheesecake filling into cooled mini muffin tins and bake for about 18 minutes, until cheesecake still moves a little when pan is shaken gently. Let cheesecakes cool to room temperature. Meringue layer can be made once cheesecake have cooled and cheesecakes can be chilled overnight, if you wish.
5. . For the meringue, increase the oven to 375°F. With electric beaters or in a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, whip the egg whites with the lemon juice until foamy. While whipping, gradually pour in the sugar and whip on one speed less than highest until whites hold a stiff peak (the meringue stands upright when whisk is lifted). Whisk in the cornstarch. Fill a piping bag fitted with a large star or plain tip and pipe a swirl on top of each cheesecake. Bake for 6 to 8 minutes, just until meringue browns lightly. Cool the cheesecakes to room temperature and then chill for at least 2 hours before serving.

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