

ELLEN'S BAKING BOOT CAMP

This semester I am teaching a Foods Class at Oakwood University in Huntsville, Alabama. Oakwood University is affiliated with the Seventh Adventist Church. It is also a designated Historical Black College and University. Vegetarianism is an important tenet in the Seventh Day Adventist faith, though members are not required to practice it. According to my Supervisor, Mentor, and Friend, Dr. Marta Sovyanhadi, the Adventist Church is encouraging members to become vegans because they believe it is the healthiest diet. Vegan vegetarians do not consume ANY meat, fish, chicken, dairy, eggs, and some will not even eat honey. Dr. Sovyanahdi, my students and I had a very fun adventure learning how to bake vegan muffins.



"BOSS, MENTOR, FRIEND - MARTA SOVYANHADI, DPH, RD"

Last Tuesday evening, Mrs. Ellen Coleman from Ellen's Creative Cakes, was recruited to teach vegan baking. Ellen is the best baking teacher in the world! She made Dr. Sovyanhadi, the students, and myself perform every step in the muffin baking process correctly and consistently. At times, she was a little cranky and gruff like a drill sergeant with a class of new soldiers. **NO ERRORS WERE TOLERATED!**

I had purchased Ellen's cakes at her business prior to my boot camp experience with her. No wonder my colleagues and I find her cakes so delicious! She demands perfection from herself and her students. Below is the recipe for the vegan Humming Bird Cake Muffins that we baked that evening. Ellen graciously allowed me to use this recipe for my blog.

HUMMINGBIRD CAKE MUFFINS

Dry Ingredients

2 cups sugar

2 cups all-purpose flour

1 cup whole wheat flour

1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon cinnamon

1 teaspoon baking soda

4.5 teaspoons egg replacer

According to Ellen, the dry ingredients are always mixed first. We mixed all of the dry ingredients in a large bowl. We then sifted the dry ingredients into another bowl. This was done to make the cake lighter and have more height.

Wet Ingredients

1.5 cups canola oil

6 Tablespoons water

2 cups diced banana

½ Tablespoon vanilla extract

8 ounces crushed pineapple

½ cup chopped pecans

One of the reasons the dry ingredients are mixed together first is because you don't want to leave the bananas out long because they will turn brown. Mix together your wet ingredients and put them into the dry ingredients. You will know that your wet and dry ingredients are thoroughly mixed when your spatula makes "tracks" in the batter. (See picture below.)



"TRACKS ARE FORMING IN THE BATTER – IT IS READY TO BE BAKED!"

We put cupcake wrappers in a muffin tin and per Ellen's guidance, only filled them half way. We put them in a preheated 325°F oven and baked them for about 15 minutes or until they were golden brown and a toothpick we poked in the muffin came out clean, with no batter stuck to it.



"ELLEN TESTING THE MUFFINS WITH A TOOTHPICK TO SEE IF THEY ARE DONE"



“LYDIA SHOWING MY BLOG READERS THE EGG REPLACER USED IN THE RECIPE. LYDIA ALSO WON THE ‘MISS OAKWOOD UNIVERSITY’ TITLE THIS YEAR.”

TIPS FROM ELLEN

1. Do not reconstitute egg replacer. In the above recipe, 4.5 teaspoons of egg replacer took the place of the three eggs that are normally in this recipe. You need to add 6 Tablespoons of water with the egg replacer, but you put it in with the wet ingredients. You DO NOT mix the egg replacer and water together first and then put in the wet ingredients.
2. Sort through your pecans before putting them in your recipe. Often times, the manufacturer inadvertently leaves a shell or two in the bag. Biting a hard pecan shell is not good for your teeth, according to Ellen. As a professional baker, she could get sued if a customer bites down wrong on a hard pecan shell.
3. You could use bananas that you had frozen in the freezer for this recipe. Just microwave them until they are soft ...this could be 15 seconds to 1 minute, depending on how frozen the banana. Also, before freezing a banana, take off the peel, or the whole banana will turn black in the freezer.
4. When you use egg replacer or gluten free flours, you do not use an electric mixer, unless you want gummy muffins.
5. In her work, Ellen cannot afford to get carpal tunnel syndrome. She demonstrated a technique that prevents her from getting this condition. She grasps a wooden spatula in her hand. With the other hand, she turns the bowl. By mixing her cakes/muffins with this method, she has never had any carpal tunnel injuries. She made us mix our muffins using this method too. (See picture below.)



"ELLEN'S MIXING TECHNIQUE TO PREVENT CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME."



"MY SMART, ADORABLE STUDENTS....I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER THE FUN WE HAD TOGETHER!"



"PROUD YOUNG WOMEN....SHOWING OFF THEIR DELICIOUS VEGAN MUFFINS!"

JUST A LITTLE NOTE TO MY STUDENTS: WHAT A PRIVILEGE IT WAS TO TEACH YOU THIS PAST SEMESTER! WORDS CANNOT EXPRESS HOW MAGNIFICENT YOU ALL ARE! I LOVE YOU TO PIECES. GOOD LUCK IN YOUR FUTURE...AND REMEMBER YOUR FOODS 111 TEACHER WHEN YOU GET RICH! ☺