

HEALTHY SNACKING

Muffin Mania For After-School Snacks

(NAPSA)—Parents and kids value the homemade touch of a muffin in a lunch box or after-school snack. Fortunately, muffins are so simple to make that you can invite the kids to get in on the action and turn muffin mania into a family affair. Kids can crack eggs, measure ingredients, stir, and fill the cups.

The secret to tender muffins is to stir the ingredients just until combined and not to overmix. When adding dried fruit and nuts, make sure the ingredients are fresh. If you discover your raisins have lingered in the pantry a bit too long, sprinkle raisins with water, loosely cover, microwave on high for 15 seconds or more, stir, cover and let stand for two to three minutes to plump them up, according to the experts at Sun-Maid Growers of California. Pat dry before adding them to the batter.

These muffins freeze well, too, so there's always something homemade. Simply pop one still frozen into a lunch sack and it will be ready to eat by the time recess rolls around. For after-school snacking, 20 or 30 seconds in the microwave will warm up a frozen muffin enough to brighten the day.

Carrot-Raisin Muffins

- 1½ cups all-purpose flour**
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon**
- 1½ teaspoons baking powder**
- ½ teaspoon baking soda**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- 2 large eggs**
- ¾ cup granulated sugar**
- 1½ cups (about 3-4 large) coarsely shredded carrots**
- ½ cup Sun-Maid Natural Raisins**
- ½ cup buttermilk or milk**



Homemade carrot-raisin muffins can be a delicious way to make sure your youngsters get their share of fruits and vegetables at lunch and after school.

- ½ cup plus 1 tablespoon butter or margarine, melted**
- ¼ cup (2 ounces) cream cheese, softened**
- 1 cup powdered sugar**
- 2 tablespoons milk**
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract**

Heat oven to 400° F. Combine flour, cinnamon, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Beat together eggs and sugar. Add carrots, raisins, butter-milk and ½ cup melted butter. Mix well. Add flour mixture. Stir until dry ingredients are moistened. Spoon batter into 12 greased or paper-lined muffin cups. Bake for 16 to 18 minutes or until golden brown. Combine cream cheese and 1 tablespoon melted butter. Stir in powdered sugar, milk and vanilla. Drizzle over muffins.

Makes 1 dozen muffins.

For Golden Raisin lovers, simply substitute Golden Raisins in place of Natural Raisins.

Other quick recipe ideas are available at www.SunMaid.com.