

CHEF'S HANDBOOK

for Gourmet
Cupcakes and Muffins



EDITED BY CHEFS AT TRUFFLE NATION

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GOURMET CUPCAKES AND MUFFINS

CUPCAKE

A cupcake, also known as fairy cake in Britain, is a small cake designed to serve one person, which may be baked in a small thin paper or aluminum cups. It can be decorated using icing and other cake decorations such as fruit and candy.

MUFFIN

A muffin is an individual-sized, baked product. Muffins are considered as short sweet/savory cupcake shaped breads that were many times served without any extra topping. Unlike cupcakes, muffins are considered as heavy breakfast item in Britain, the country where they were invented.

HISTORY

Cupcakes were invented using the leftover cake batter. Instead of throwing away any extra cake batter, bakers decided to bake them in small individual mould similar to muffin mould. They were frosted/decorated the same way cakes were designed.

Moufflet means soft bread in French. This is the origin of the word muffin. Muffins were also called 'quick breads' in America. They were baked in individual mould and for a long time yeast was used as a leavening agent.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CUPCAKES AND MUFFINS THE METHOD:

The main difference between cupcakes and muffins can be observed with the way their batter is prepared.

1. THE METHOD

For cupcakes we use the same method we use for baking cakes, we start with creaming together the butter and sugar. A simple cupcake batter is beaten significantly longer than muffin batter; this creates a uniformness of air bubbles throughout the cupcake. Meanwhile Muffin batter, on the other hand, is beaten briefly and remains relatively lumpy. This makes for a denser baked good.

2. THE INGREDIENTS

On comparing ancient Cupcake and Muffin recipes we came to know that there was a significant difference in their ingredients. While only all-purpose flour was used for making cupcakes, A variety of flours (whole wheat, all-purpose, oats, Buckwheat) were used for making muffins. Unlike nowadays, that time cupcakes were made only with butter while muffin were made with oil and that's why muffins were considered healthier and a good breakfast option.



3. PRESENTATION

Apart from the method and Ingredients, cupcakes and muffins have their own visual appeal. While cupcakes are seen as party Dessert, presented in an elegant way. Muffins on the other hand are considered tea time snacks.

ROLE OF INGREDIENTS

The ingredients used in Muffins and Cupcakes fall into Two Categories: Those that **strengthen** the muffin structure and those that **weakens** it. In the **first category** we have our **Flour and Eggs**, both of which contain portions (that is protein) that coagulate when baked to form the framework or supporting structure of the Sponge. Flour also contains starch which gelatinises (which means it absorbs water) and stabilize the structure for the muffin.

In the **second category** we have **Fat, Sugar and Rising Agents**, which softens the structure by weakening it. Whereas **liquid ingredients** fall under both the categories because it combines with the gluten forming portions of flour to form gluten but excessive liquid cause a muffin to collapse as well.

CAKE FLOUR

Cake flour is one of the primary ingredients used in making cupcakes, muffins and cakes. Cake flour is made from finely milled soft winter wheat which is high in starch and low in gluten. Cake flour is highly used in professional baking. ,

HOW TO MAKE CAKE FLOUR:

1 cup All purpose flour or maida

2 tbsp cornflour

First remove 2 Tbsp flour from 1 cup all purpose flour and add 2 tbsp cornflour in it. In a large bowl place the mixture by passing it through a sieve. Give a good mix and your cake flour is ready for use.



Store it in the same way as you store normal flour . In case you are not able to make cake flour you can simply use all purpose flour or maida in place of it.

EGGS

It is the ingredient without which everything would fall apart. It binds all the ingredients together into one final product. Eggs add structure in the form of protein. Egg yolks contain emulsifiers that help to form a thick, velvety batter that doesn't separate. Also, since eggs are 73% water, they add to the overall moisture content in the baked good. Hands down it is the most versatile ingredient used in baking. Unfortunately, our Indian eggs are a little small in size when compared with western eggs. So if you ever plan to work on a foreign recipe then keep in mind that they weight around 55-60gm whereas Indian eggs in general weight from 45-50 Gm. Another important tip about eggs is that they must always be used at room temperature. This allows the whites and yellow to get easily mixed with the batter. Mixing the eggs helps in trapping air in the batter, which produces cakes with a lighter texture. If you try to bake with cold eggs, there are chances that the cold egg will curdle with the butter during the mixing process thus the proper mixing will not take place. To bring eggs to room temperature quickly, soak them in a bowl of warm water for 10-15 minutes.

SUGAR

The beautiful relation of Carbon, Oxygen and hydrogen together formed the ingredient that took the world Of Baking and Cooking like a thunder. In professional baking we have a wide range of different types of sugar but for this course we need only the top three that is superfine sugar (caster), powdered sugar and brown sugar. Sugar contributes flavour and facilitates the incorporation of air into the batter

CASTER SUGAR/ SUPERFINE SUGAR/ GRANULATED SUGAR

You will notice that in most of the recipes we have used Superfine sugar (like caster or granulated) s Due to its crystal size, when it is added to cake batters it dissolves easily and it gives a nice crumbly structure as the sugar crystals are able to hold air in the batter.



ICING SUGAR / POWDERED SUGAR/ CONFECTIONER'S SUGAR

This is the most finely ground white sugar available. It contains 3% starch to prevent it from caking (Caking simply means turning into hard lumps) as it can absorb moisture very fast. Powdered sugar dissolves quickly in a solution and makes it perfect for icing, fondant, and glazes. This particular sugar is widely used for dusting decorations.

BROWN SUGAR

Brown sugar is simply white granulated sugar with different degrees of molasses added to it. This addition gives sugar its moist, sticky quality as well as a stronger flavour than white sugar. One might find several varieties of brown sugar itself, such as light, medium or dark sugar. The only difference between them is the level of molasses they contain. Brown sugar delivers the same amount of sweetness as white sugar.

BUTTER

Butter is a main ingredient in almost all traditional baking recipes, used for bread, brownies, cakes, cookies, cupcakes etc. Other fat agents used nowadays are shortening, margarine and oil. Butter has moisture present in it, One can use either salted or unsalted butter for baking. The only reason why unsalted butter is preferred over salted is that that way bakers can control the amount of salt in the baked items. Do not confuse unsalted butter with white butter as they both are different and white butter is not suitable for baking due to its low-fat content. While purchasing butter for baking, make sure that brand that you are using has at least 80 gm of fat per 100 gm, in India brands like Amul successfully delivers that. Butter is usually used when it is at room temperature unless it is mentioned specially to be used as cold or melted form.

So when we talk about room temperature but what does that exactly mean, as different locations can have different room temperatures. A student in Kashmir will have a much cooler room temperature than a student baking in Rajasthan. So by room temperature we mean that the butter should be soft on touch and not super squishy. **(To replace melted butter with oil, simply use this formula 100 gm butter = 80 gm oil)** although its not recommended to replace softened butter with oil in any recipe.



UNSWEETENED COCOA POWDER

When it comes to preference Cocoa powder is superior to chocolate for baking cupcakes and muffins as it provides more intense chocolate flavour. Cocoa has a toughening effect on cake structures so cakes containing cocoa have a higher amount of baking powder to compensate. For cake baking always use unsweetened natural cocoa powder as they hold acid which reacts with baking soda and helps you in achieving a soft, well risen cake.

SALT

The only function of salt in baking is to bring up or heighten flavours. Without salt, the cake would have a decidedly flat taste.

BAKING SODA- SODIUM BICARBONATE

Also known as bicarbonate of soda or Meetha soda in India, baking soda is a very white powdery substance that reacts with acidic ingredients like natural cocoa powder, vinegar, curd etc., In a batter or dough, this reaction produces CO₂ that causes the rise in cakes and other baked ingredients.

BAKING POWDER

Many non-bakers may think that baking powder is the same as baking soda but it's not. Baking powder is a mixture of baking soda and a dry acid, such as cream of tartar, and perhaps some cornstarch to help keep the two separate and dry. Just like Baking soda, the baking powder also reacts during the mixing process. The first reaction happens when the baking powder mixes with wet ingredients (when dry ingredients are introduced to wet ingredients) and the second reaction happens when the baking powder is heated (when the batter is cooking inside the oven)Though baking powder is somehow a lighter version of baking soda that doesn't mean you can interchange them in any of the recipes. You must always use the right leavener as mentioned in the recipe

Special Note : In any of the recipes you can use compound chocolate in place of couverture/ Belgian chocolate, though the flavour of the product will be compromised.

FAULTS IN CUPCAKES AND MUFFIN

1. X-FAULT



An x-fault is when you get a sharp peak in cupcakes or muffins. This could happen due to many reasons. Few of them are-

- **Uneven dispersion of raising agents-** when the leavening agents like baking powder and baking soda is not mixed well into the batter, it could lead to peaks and cracks from where they are more in quantity.
- **Uneven baking temperature-** there can be heating spots in the oven. The place where heat is more can cause batter to rise immediately leading to a peak.
- **Too much liquid-** when the liquid ingredients are more, it stops the batter to rise evenly as batter is not able to hold any aeration.

2. M-FAULT (SUNK IN THE MIDDLE)



When the centre of the cupcakes or muffins sinks, it is called an M-fault. Reasons for this are :

- **Too much raising agents-** having too much baking powder in the batter can lead to rising of the cupcake initially however it'll end up sinking in the end as the baking powder weakens the structure of the cupcakes.
- **Too much fat-** fat being a tenderising agent in cupcakes and muffins, makes the product soft. Hence too much of it will weaken the holding capacity of flour/eggs and lead to sunken center.
- **Oven too cold-** if the oven temperature is too low than what was required for baking, then the cupcakes will sink as the batter did not receive the initial heat it needs to rise.

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