

Better-for-You Baking

One of the many pleasures during the holiday season is the abundance of delicious baked goods. If you are worried that the holiday fudge you are creating will turn into this year's holiday "pudge" — fret not. Here are some simple tricks you can use to make this season's sweet samplings healthier.

- 1. Sneak in fruits and vegetables.** Substituting fruits and/or vegetables (such as strawberries, shredded apple, carrots, zucchini, or *mashed* banana, sweet potato, winter squash, or beets) for some of the fat in your baked goods can add flavor without adding extra calories. If you add these, reduce the fat (oil/butter) in the recipe by $\frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{3}$. If the fruit is acidic (such as tomatoes, oranges, or lemons), cut baking powder called for by one-half, and add $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of baking soda to the recipe. For example, change 1 Tbsp baking powder to $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp baking powder + $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp baking soda. When using whole grain flour, add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit or vegetable for every 2 cups of flour. You can substitute sugar for applesauce in a 1:1 ratio, but for every cup of applesauce you use, reduce the amount of liquid in the recipe by $\frac{1}{4}$ cup.
- 2. Use protein for fat in recipes.** Substitute plain Greek yogurt for $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ oil, shortening, butter, margarine, or cream cheese in frostings, cookies, cakes, scones, and pie crusts. See chart below.
- 3. Watch those portions.** Ever notice that a cookie recipe will say "makes 4 dozen" but your batch yields only 3 dozen? This can happen from using oversized scoops of dough. Be mindful of the amount you are portioning (on average one cookie should be about a tablespoon) and remain consistent throughout the process.
- 4. Be salt savvy.** Making baked goods from scratch, and using less processed products can help cut the sodium content.

Unless a recipe specifies using salted butter, use the unsalted type, which has 90 mg less sodium per tablespoon.

When the recipe calls for:	Use this healthy substitute instead:*
Buttermilk (1 cup)	$\frac{1}{3}$ cup of milk (low fat) + $\frac{2}{3}$ cup Greek yogurt (plain)
Sour cream and/or Crème Fraiche	Greek yogurt (plain low-fat or fat-free)
Heavy cream (1 cup)	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup cream + $\frac{1}{2}$ cup Greek yogurt (plain)
Cream cheese and/or mascarpone (8 oz)	4 oz cream + $\frac{1}{2}$ cup Greek yogurt (plain)
Butter (1 cup)	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup unsalted butter + $\frac{1}{4}$ cup Greek yogurt (plain)

Cranberry-Almond Oatmeal Cookies

48 cookies (1 cookie per serving)

Source: SparkRecipes.com

1 cup canned pumpkin
1 cup brown sugar
2 eggs
1 tsp vanilla
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups whole wheat flour
1 tsp baking soda
1 tsp cinnamon

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt
3 cups quick oats
1 cup dried cranberries (like Craisins®)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup almonds

Nutrition Facts: Calories 64, Fat 1 gm, Sodium 77 mg, Carbohydrate 14 gm, Fiber 1 gm, Protein 2 gm

Directions: Preheat oven to 350° F. Beat together pumpkin and sugar. Add eggs and vanilla, beat well. Add flour, baking soda, cinnamon salt; mix. Stir in oats, cranberries, and almonds. Drop rounded spoonfuls onto ungreased cookie sheet. Bake for 10-12 minutes. Let cool one minute.

*Sources: HomeBaking.org and CabotCheese.coop

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Pumpkin Cheesecake Shooters

16 servings

Source: SkinnyTaste.com

3 (1.5 oz total) whole chocolate graham crackers
4 oz - reduced fat cream cheese, softened
½ cup pure canned pumpkin
1 tsp pure vanilla extract
3 Tbsp dark brown sugar, unpacked
1 tsp pumpkin pie spice

¼ tsp nutmeg
¼ tsp cinnamon
8 oz light whipped topping

***Nutrition Facts:** Calories 78, Fat 4 gm, Sodium 17 mg, Carbohydrate 12 gm, Sugars 8 gm, Fiber 0 gm, Protein 1 gm*

Directions: Crush graham crackers in a food processor. Set aside. In a large bowl beat the cream cheese until smooth with an electric mixer. Add the pumpkin, vanilla, sugar, pumpkin pie spice, nutmeg and cinnamon. Beat until well combined and creamy. Use a spatula to fold in 5 oz (1 ½ cups) of the whipped topping; combine until no streaks remain. Place in a piping bag or zip-lock bag with a corner snipped off. **To assemble:** Sprinkle ½ teaspoon of graham cracker crumbs on the bottom of each shot glass. Pipe a layer of pumpkin cheesecake onto graham cracker crust (about 1 Tbsp) followed by a layer of whipped topping. Repeat a second layer and finish with another sprinkle of crumbs. Insert small spoons and refrigerate till ready to serve.

**Each shot glass has 2 Tbsp pumpkin cheesecake, 1 Tbsp whipped topping, and 1 tsp graham cracker crumbs total.*

Morning Glory Muffins

Makes 18 muffins (1 muffin per serving)

Source: MayoClinic.com

1 cup all-purpose (plain) flour
1 cup whole-wheat flour
¾ cup sugar
2 tsp baking soda
2 tsp ground cinnamon
¾ cup egg substitute
½ cup vegetable oil
½ cup unsweetened applesauce

2 tsp vanilla extract
2 cups chopped apples (unpeeled)
½ cup raisins
¾ cup grated carrots
2 Tbsp chopped pecans

***Nutrition Facts:** Calories 175, Fat 7 gm, Sodium 163 mg, Carbohydrate 25 gm, Fiber 2 gm, Protein 3 gm*

Directions: Preheat the oven to 350°. Line a muffin pan with paper or foil liners. In a large bowl, combine the flours, sugar, baking soda, and cinnamon. Whisk to blend evenly. In a separate bowl, add the egg substitute, oil, applesauce, and vanilla. Stir in the apples, raisins, and carrots. Add to the flour mixture and blend just until moistened but still slightly lumpy. Spoon the batter into muffin cups, filling each cup about 2/3 full. Sprinkle with chopped pecans and bake until springy to the touch, about 35 minutes. Let cool for 5 minutes, then transfer the muffins to a wire rack and let cool completely.

Easy Flaky Cabot Greek Style Pie Crust

Makes 2 single pie crusts or 1 double crust, 8 servings

Source: CabotCheese.coop

2 ¼ cups all-purpose flour, fluffed in bag with a fork or whisk before measuring
¼ tsp salt
1 ½ sticks salted butter, cold from refrigerator
½ cup plain low-fat Greek yogurt

***Nutrition Facts:** Calories 290, Fat 18 gm, Sodium 230 mg, Carbohydrate 27 gm, Sugars 1 gm, Fiber 1 gm, Protein 5 gm*

While all pie crusts are high in fat, this one contains no Crisco, is higher in protein, lower in saturated fat and provides more potassium and calcium than a standard pie crust.

Directions: In a large bowl, stir together flour and salt. Cut butter into small pieces and add to flour mixture. With fingertips, press/squish pieces of butter into smaller flat flakes. Continue until you no longer feel any cold hard pieces of butter, and all the butter has been flattened into approximate ½ -inch or so flakes. Stir in yogurt with a fork as thoroughly as possible (mixture will still be totally crumbly). Gently knead in bowl just until mixture comes together to form dough, with no more crumbly bits. Divide dough in half. Roll out each half between two sheets of waxed paper or plastic wrap, occasionally lifting off paper — or wrap from both sides to release dough from creases and allow it to spread further. Alternatively, roll out on lightly floured work surface. Place in pie plate or plates as needed.