

Gluten-free English Muffins Recipe

Adapted from Nancy Cain's excellent Against The Grain Cookbook

Makes 8 English muffins

Ingredients

Weight	Volume	Ingredient
225 Grams	2 cups	Tapioca starch (aka Tapioca flour)
320 Grams	1 ¾ cups	light buckwheat flour
230 Grams	1 cup	milk (whole or skim, I use whole)
	1	large egg
	3 Tbs	salted butter – cut into small cubes to melt quickly
	1 TB	salted butter – soft, at room temperature to coat muffin rings
	1 Tsp	kosher salt
	1 TB	active dry yeast
	1 Tsp	sugar
	½ cup	bottled water (chlorine free)
As needed		Cornmeal to top muffins

Making the dough (more like a thick batter)

1. In a stand mixer with the Flat Beater blade combine the tapioca starch, buckwheat flour, and salt until blended. See Notes below if you want to use a food processor instead of a stand mixer.
2. In a small bowl add the sugar to ½ cup warm bottled water and stir until it dissolves. Add the yeast and stir in with a small whisk and let proof while you complete step 3..
3. In a medium saucepan bring the milk and butter cubes to a boil, stirring constantly. Be careful that the milk does not foam up out of the pan. Immediately pour the hot mixture into the flours and mix at speed 1 until you have a moist sand like mixture. Allow to cool for 20 minutes.
4. Add the yeast mixture to the cooled dough and blend until combined. Add the egg and blend the dough until it is smooth. It should have a thick batter like texture and add small amounts of either additional water or buckwheat flour as needed to get to that consistency.
5. Remove the bowl from the mixer, scrape any batter from the Flat Beater back into the bowl, cover with plastic wrap and let rise in an oven with the oven light on for 45-60 minutes, until doubled. If your oven has a Proof setting or can be set to 100°, do that to give the dough a slightly elevated temperature to rise in.
6. While the dough is rising, cut squares of parchment paper just large enough so one of your English Muffin rings can sit on it with no gaps. You will need a square for each of your rings.
7. Use the softened butter to liberally coat the inside of each ring so the rings will slide off during the cooking process. On a baking sheet (½ sheet pan size, put your 8 squares of parchment with a buttered ring centered on each one. Oil or butter a ½ cup measure and use that to put ½ cup of dough (batter) into each of the rings. Use a rubber spatula to get all the dough out of the measuring cup into the ring. Smooth the top of the ring with the spatula.
8. When all of the dough is in the rings, cover the baking sheet with plastic wrap and put into the refrigerator to rise overnight. This long slow rise significantly helps the taste and texture.
9. The next day take the baking sheet out of the refrigerator and put in an oven to proof for at least 2 hours with the oven light on and at a Proof setting if your oven has one. You can accelerate the warming process a little if you use a metal spatula to move each parchment square with a ring on it to a new baking sheet that is at room temperature in place of the one

that has been in the refrigerator overnight. The dough should be at room temperature when you touch it before you start the cooking process. Any time you are moving or turning the rings, be careful to keep the ring tight to the parchment paper, or to the fry pan when the paper has been removed, or some of the batter will leak out of any gaps. That leakage will have to be trimmed off so the muffins can go in the toaster when you want to eat them.

Cooking process

1. This is a two-step cooking process. In step one you will cook the muffins in the ring in a cast iron fry pan for about 5 minutes per side until each side is lightly browned and you can remove the ring. In step two you will put the browned muffins in a 350° oven for about 10 minutes, until the centers are fully baked. When you want to eat the muffins, you will have a third stage of splitting them in half horizontally and putting them in a toaster until they are nicely toasted and then adding any toppings like butter and jam that you want or using them in a recipe like Eggs Benedict.
2. I use the 3.75" rings sold by King Arthur Flour in sets of four rings in each package. This size makes a larger muffin than the Arnold's English muffins sold in the stores that we have enjoyed for years. If you are using a smaller size ring, and they are available on Amazon in many sizes, you may need to adjust how much of the dough/batter you want in each ring since the smaller diameter rings may not need the same amount as my larger rings do. That may also mean that you need less total dough/batter and will need to reduce the quantities from what I have above.
3. Preheat your oven to 350° and have a baking pan with a rack in the bottom ready to put the muffins on as they complete the fry pan process. Make sure your oven is up to temperature before going to step three below.
4. Put a large cast iron fry pan under low heat and sprinkle some cornmeal in the bottom of the fry pan. Bring it up to heat so that if you add a drop of water to the pan it will immediately sizzle. See the Notes below on cooking temperature for this phase.
5. Using a metal spatula carefully put it under the parchment paper and, keeping the rings tight against the paper, slide it into the hot cast iron fry pan. I am able to do three muffins at a time in my 12" cast iron fry pan. Sprinkle some cornmeal on the top of each muffin. Cook for five minutes. After 2-3 minutes use a tongs to slide the parchment paper away and put it in the trash. After the five minutes cooking time for side one, using two spatulas, one on each side, carefully flip the muffin onto the other side. The two spatulas are so you can press the ring tight against the fry pan when you slide the other spatula out from underneath it so none of the batter leaks out since that side is still not fully set. Cook the second side for about 5 minutes. Each side should be lightly browned. If they are not, see the Note below on temperature and time for this stage of the cooking process. After about three minutes on the second side see if you can use tongs to pull the hot ring up and off the muffin. Using a large spoon to apply gentle pressure on the top of the muffin can help get the ring off. If it does not come off easily leave it on and when the muffin has been moved to the baking sheet you can use the tongs and spoon to get it off before putting the muffins in to bake. After the second side is lightly browned, remove and put on the rack of the baking sheet.
6. The muffins have to be completely cooked and going into the oven for about 10 minutes makes sure that the centers are properly baked. You can use a cake tester, or toothpick if you don't have one, to put into the center and pull it out. If there is any residue on the cake tester, the center is not fully baked. If you are doing three muffins at a time you can do the baking in parallel stages instead of having first muffins sit on the baking sheet for at least 20 minutes while you complete the frying process for the other muffins and then put all of them into bake.

Managing your time properly in this parallel process is very important. Put the second three muffins into the fry pan. As soon as they are in the fry pan, put the first three muffins into the oven to bake. Right after you flip the second set of muffins, pull the baking sheet out and use a cake tester to test the doneness of the centers. If any of them are not fully baked, put them back for another 4 minutes. Just before the muffins in the fry pan are ready to come out, take the baking sheet out of the oven and move those first three muffins to a cooling rack. Then move the second set of muffins from the fry pan to the baking sheet. You can then repeat this process with the last two muffins in the fry pan and the second three muffins in the oven.

7. Allow the muffins to cool fully on a cooling rack before putting any in the toaster.
8. The muffins will keep for a couple of days if stored in a cloth bread bag in a bread box. They can be frozen for a few months. If you put them in a zip log bag with parchment paper between each of the muffins, it will be easy to take out as many muffins as you want to eat from that bag and leave the rest still frozen. The frozen muffins can defrost on the counter or in a microwave at a low setting like 50%.

Notes:

1. I did a blog post on gluten-free English muffins where there is some very good background, discussion, and pictures that could be helpful. You can find that blog post at www.billwinetravelfood.com and this recipe is available for download from that site
2. The toughest part of this recipe is getting the sides lightly browned, and the center fully baked but not overcooked. The fry pan needs to be hot enough to lightly brown each side but not too dark. It is a slow cook process that partially cooks the center which is then finished in the oven. See the next note about times and temperatures. The first time you try this recipe I suggest that you just go through the cooking process with just one muffin and make sure you have the fry pan temperature and time right for lightly browning the sides and the time in the oven right to complete the baking. Let that muffin cool on the rack and use a fork to split it open and check the doneness of the center. If it looks good, toast it and confirm the taste is what you want. If not, vary the times and temperatures until you get what works for your cast iron fry pan, range, and oven. Once you get the results you want you can cook the rest of the dough and, if you make notes on what you did, you can confidently go through the two-step cooking process with future batches.
3. If your sides are not a light brown after 5 minutes, you should raise the heat under the fry pan a little. You want each side to be in the fry pan at least 4 minutes and not much longer than 5 minutes to get them partially cooked through. Each side should only be lightly browned, they will go in the toaster before being eaten.
4. On the day of the cooking process, make sure that you have about 1 tablespoon of butter softened and at room temperature to lubricate the insides of each ring. I use my finger to get a good amount of butter inside each ring so they more easily come off during the frying process.
5. You can use a food processor if you don't have a stand mixer or prefer that over a stand mixer. A couple of things to consider when using a food processor.
 - a. This recipe will be about the max that a typical food processor can handle. You might consider cutting the recipe in half for 4 muffins or in 2/3 for 6 muffins to better fit the bowl size of your food processor. Use a dough blade with a dull edge, not the regular blade with the sharp edge if you have one.
 - b. The high speed of the food processor will add heat when the hot milk is added, and the initial mixing is done. It may take longer than 20 minutes to cool down to be only slightly warm to the touch before adding the yeast. Too much heat can kill a lot of the yeast. The temperature of the batter will go up again from the speed of the food

processor blade and you may need it to cool down again before adding the egg so the egg is not cooked by the hot batter.

- c. If the batter is higher than the center cylinder that blade sits on, It may require you moving the dough/batter to a different bowl for the first rising in the oven. That can be a real pain in getting all the batter out of the food processor bowl because it is a thick batter that doesn't pour but is not like a ball of dough that you can take out by hand.