

Cleo Coyle's Double-Chocolate Hurricane Muffins

Photos and text © 2010 by Alice Alfonsi, who writes The Coffeehouse Mysteries as Cleo Coyle in collaboration with her husband, Marc Cerasini

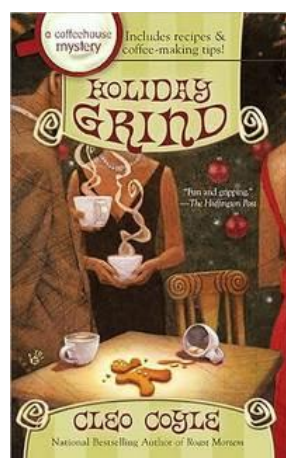
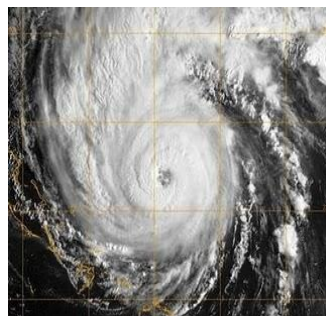
Why do I call these “hurricane” muffins? Two reasons: I came up with this recipe the week hurricane Earl blew through the Eastern Seaboard. These deliciously moist muffins also bake up with a swirling vortex of gooey chocolate at their centers. It reminded me of the deceptively peaceful hurricane eye. May you bake them with joy. ~ Cleo

Makes: about 18 muffins

Ingredients:

- 1 box (18.25 ounces) Devil's Food cake mix (*the kind with pudding in the mix*)
- 4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) butter, melted
- 2 large eggs, beaten with fork
- 2 very ripe bananas, mashed (**see my note about substitutions*)
- 2 teaspoons vanilla (*gives a nice flavor balance to the chocolate cake mix starter*)
- 1/2 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips (*or chopped block chocolate*)
- 1/2 cup dry roasted, unsalted peanuts, chopped (*or walnuts or hazelnuts*)

Directions: Place all ingredients into a large mixing bowl. (*Be sure the melted butter is not too hot. You don't want to cook the eggs.*) Mix by hand until well blended, but do not over mix. (*If you overwork the batter, you'll develop the gluten in the flour, and the muffins will be tough instead of tender.*) Line muffin cups with paper liners and fill about 2/3rds of each cup with batter. Bake at 350° Fahrenheit for 20 minutes. (*Do not over bake the muffins. It's actually better to under bake than to over bake.*) Remove muffins from the oven and carefully transfer to a rack to cool. (*If muffins remain too long in the hot pan, their bottoms may steam and become tough.*)



***EASY SUBSTITUTIONS** - If you don't like peanuts, swap them out for another nut (walnuts or hazelnuts will both work well). The bananas are a great way to cut down on the need for fat in this recipe. If you aren't a fan of bananas, however, you can substitute 1/2 cup of applesauce instead. If you don't care about added fat, then simply substitute another 1/2 cup of melted butter (or vegetable or canola oil). Then you can...

Eat with joy! ~ Cleo Coyle

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