Cleo Coyle's Best Blueberry Muffins Recipe

Text and photos (c) by Alice Alfonsi who writes The Coffeehouse Mysteries as Cleo Coyle with her husband, Marc Cerasini.

Why do I call this the BEST recipe for Blueberry Muffins? Because it gives you impressive results with little fuss and few ingredients. It's the best because it's the kind of recipe you will use again and again. These are not cupcakes pretending to be muffins—with more sugary cake than berries. Blueberries are a healthy super-food, and they're packed into theses muffins. The muffins will bake up beautifully, too. No gray batter. And the crumb is tender with a taste like pound cake, yet you won't need to drag out your mixer to cream butter into sugar. Simply whisk the ingredients together in one bowl. The secret is in the use of whole milk, not skim or low fat; and especially in the combination of vanilla and lemon flavorings. So don't leave those out, and may you... *Eat with blueberry joy!*

~ Cleo Coyle, author of The Coffeehouse Mysteries

Makes 6 standard muffins

Ingredients:

1 cup blueberries *(fresh or frozen)* + 2 teaspoons all-purpose flour
1 large egg
1/2 cup whole milk *(or half-and-half aka light cream or heavy cream)*
1/4 cup vegetable or canola oil
1/4 cup white, granulated sugar
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
1/2 teaspoon fresh lemon zest (grated lemon peel, no white pith)
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt *(or 1/8 teaspoon table salt)*
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 cup all-purpose flour

(optional) 1-2 tablespoons coarse finishing sugar such as Turbinado or Demerara or a white coarse sugar to sprinkle on before baking.

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Step 1 - Prep oven and muffin pan: Preheat oven at least 30 minutes to 375º F. Line 6 muffin cups with paper holders (yellow makes a nice presentation); lightly coat papers with non-stick spray.

Step 2 - Prep blueberries: If using fresh blueberries, de-stem wash, drain, and pat dry. They can be a little moist, no worries. If using frozen blueberries, use them right out of the freezer, do not thaw. Gently toss the fresh or still-frozen blueberries in the 2 teaspoons of flour. Take care not to crush the berries as you toss them, keep them whole. The flour will absorb excess juice while baking and prevent your muffins from turning gray. Set aside.

Step 3 - Create batter with one bowl mixing method: Crack egg into a mixing bowl and gently beat with a whisk. Add milk, oil, sugar, vanilla, lemon zest, and salt and whisk until well blended. Now add baking powder and whisk very well, until dissolved. Switching to a spoon or spatula, mix in the flour until all the raw flour disappears and a lumpy batter forms. Do not over-mix at this stage or you will develop the gluten in the flour and your muffins will be tough instead of tender. Finally, gently fold in the flour-tossed blueberries, again, taking care not to crush them. Keep them whole.

Tip: Be sure to grate only the yellow part of the lemon rind and not the bitter, white pith. A **microplane**, like the one shown above (about $10.00 US) is made for zesting citrus. To shop online for one, click here.

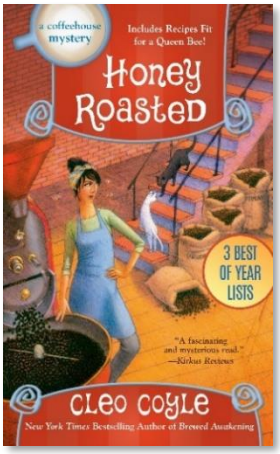
Step 4: Prep for baking: This batter makes 6 standard muffins. Divide it up evenly among your paper-lined (and lightly sprayed) muffin cups. I do not use finishing sugar. But you may like this addition. If using a coarse finishing sugar, sprinkle over each unbaked muffin top as shown...

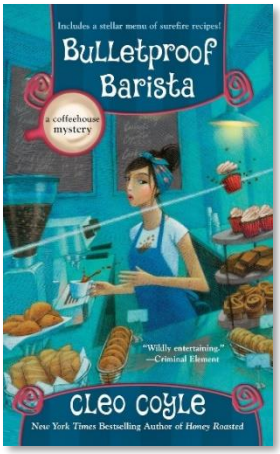
Step 5 - Bake in your well-preheated 375º F. oven for 25 to 30 minutes. Muffins are done when tops just begin to become light golden brown.

Note: The muffins pictured right do not have finishing sugar. The muffins shown below do. Both are delicious, but beware: Although muffins with sugar on top will stay nice and crunchy the first day, the sugared tops may go soggy on you if you wrap them in plastic for storage. My advice: when baking muffins a few days in advance for a party or bake sale, leave the extra sugar off.

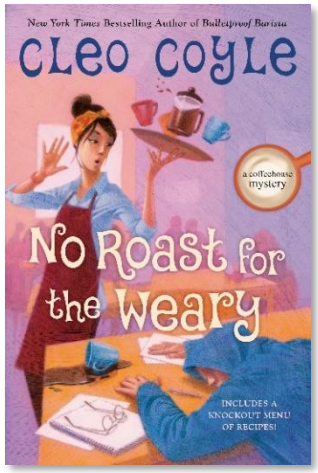
Toothpick method for de-panning hot muffins: If muffins are left in hot pans, bottoms may steam and become tough. Gently insert a toothpick on each side of muffin. Use the toothpicks as handles and lift the muffin from pan. This is a quick way to remove muffins without squashing them.

To store: Once completely cool, store muffins in a Ziplock plastic bag or plastic container. If your weather or climate is warm, also place in refrigerator. They will keep well several days that way. Muffins can be reheated easily (10 to 15 seconds) in microwave, so you can continue to...*Eat with joy! ~ Cleo*





The Coffeehouse Mysteries are bestselling culinary mysteries, set in a landmark Greenwich Village coffeehouse. Each includes the added bonus of recipes.
To learn more and see more recipes, visit Cleo Coyle's online coffeehouse at www.CoffeehouseMystery.com
And her recipe blog at www.CleoCoyleRecipes.com



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