

Corn Muffin Tops

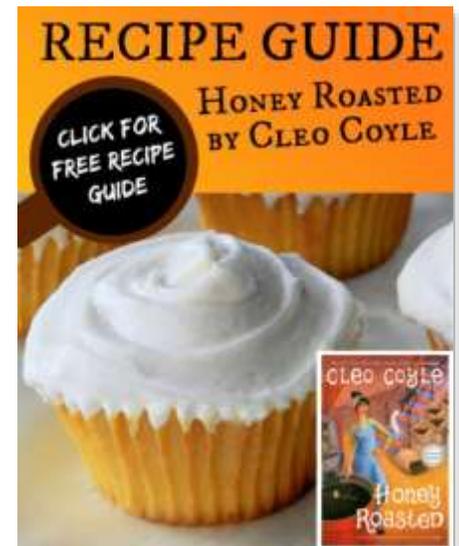
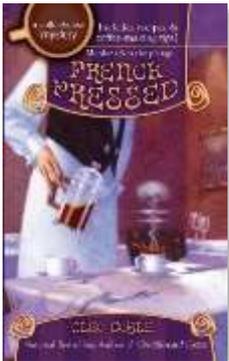
by Cleo Coyle

Text and photos (c) 2009 by Alice Alfonsi who writes [The Coffeehouse Mysteries](#) as [Cleo Coyle](#) with her husband, Marc Cerasini.

Recipe inspired by (and heavily adapted) from Julia Child's Corn Muffin Sticks. See what changes Cleo made and why by reading [her blog post here](#).

These corn muffin tops are delectable right out of the oven with melted butter sliding off the tops. They're just as good the next day, dunked in a freshly poured cuppa joe. This recipe is actually my second involving corn bread. My first—a more traditional recipe—can be found in my sixth Coffeehouse Mystery, [French Pressed](#). True, in culinary mystery with French in the title, corn bread may seem an oddball entry. But if you read French

Pressed, you'll see I actually make an important culinary point with the bread. (It has to do with "palate fatigue"—a philosophy of modern gastronomy.) The corn bread even serves a larger thematic purpose: After my amateur sleuth, Clare Cosi, bakes up a batch and watches another character eat it, she realizes an important difference between the two men in her life. Such is the fun of writing culinary fiction—food television may have food porn, but I get to create food metaphors. ~ Cleo



INGREDIENTS:

- 1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour**
- 1/2 cup yellow corn meal** (*I use Quaker*)
- 1/2 cup sugar**
- 1/2 teaspoon salt**
- 2 teaspoons baking powder** (*for leavening*)
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda** (*to counteract the acid in the sour cream*)
- 1 extra large egg** (*beaten with fork*)
- 1/4 cup vegetable, canola or another neutral-tasting oil**
- 1/2 cup whole milk**
- 1/2 cup sour cream** (*to add a subtle layer of bright tanginess*)

Servings: about 12 muffin tops

*Free Recipe Guide to Cleo's new culinary mystery **Honey Roasted:** [click here](#).*

(1) Mix ingredients: Measure out flour, corn meal, sugar, salt, baking powder, and baking soda into a mixing bowl. Add the egg, oil, milk, and sour cream. Stir only enough to blend the ingredients into a smooth, thick batter. Do not over mix or you'll produce gluten in the flour and your muffin tops will be tough instead of tender. Place the bowl in the fridge to chill for ten minutes.



(2) Preheat oven & prepare pan: While the batter is chilling, preheat oven to 425° Fahrenheit. Spray a baking sheet with cooking spray. (You can use butter or oil to grease it if you prefer.) When oven is ready, remove batter from fridge and drop by heaping tablespoons onto the baking sheet as shown in the photo. You want rounds of about 2-inches. These will double in size after baking so leave room between.



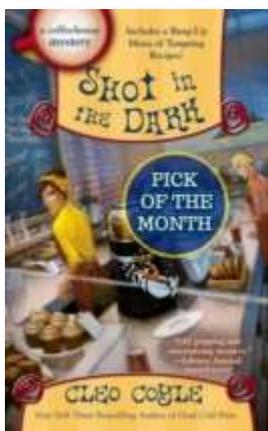
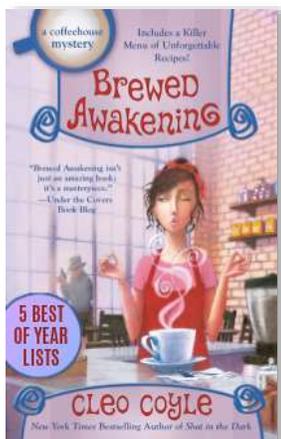
(3) Bake: Depending on your oven and the kind of baking sheets you're using, the baking time may be between 8 and 10 minutes. This is a very hot oven, so keep an eye on your batter. You want the rounds to brown just a little around the edges (see my photos) but you do not want them to burn. The rounds will rise in the center, resembling a muffin top, and should be golden in color. Serve the muffin tops warm with butter or allow them to cool on a rack.



Note on Cooling: Do not allow the muffin tops to cool on the hot pan. The bottoms may end up steaming and become tough! Cool them on a rack.

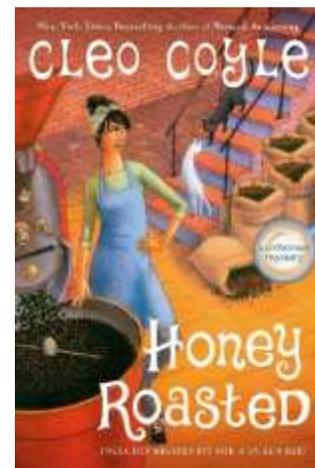
How to store: To store, allow to cool completely (otherwise moisture will condense, and you'll get a soggy product). Wrap in plastic or place in an airtight container and store in refrigerator. They'll keep several days this way.

Eat with joy! ~ Cleo



The [Coffeehouse Mysteries](http://www.CoffeehouseMystery.com) 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](http://www.CoffeehouseMystery.com)

And her recipe blog at www.CleoCoyleRecipes.com



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