

Quick breads are easy for kids to bake

A golden-brown loaf of quick bread can be a great source of pride for beginning bakers. Easier and less-time consuming to prepare than yeast breads, quick breads offer boys and girls the opportunity to master a number of basic baking skills. Just imagine the satisfaction your child will feel when that first fragrant loaf comes out of the oven.

Explain to first-timers that baking is a science as well as a skill. To ensure successful results, all ingredients must be carefully measured using standard measuring equipment. Coffee cups and spoons used for eating vary greatly in size and must not be substituted for the correct "tools of the trade." Review the following measuring procedures with your youngster before you begin your quick-bread baking adventure:

- Spoon dry ingredients such as flour, sugar and nuts into the correct size measuring cup level with a straight-edged metal spatula or knife.

- Pour liquids into a clear measuring cup with a spout. Place the cup on a level surface and fill to the correct line, checking at eye level for accuracy.

- Pack brown sugar, soft margarine and peanut butter firmly into the correct size measuring cup level with a straight-edged spatula or knife. Firmly packing these ingredients forces the air out and will ensure an accurate measure.

- Dip the correct size measuring spoon into foods such as baking powder, soda and spices; level with the edge of a metal spatula.

WHILE PREPARING quick

breads, junior cooks may encounter unfamiliar recipe terms. Assist with "translating" these terms at the appropriate time.

- Greased and floured loaf pan. Grease the inside of the pan with shortening, using paper towel or wax paper. Spoon about a tablespoon of your into the pan. Tilt, turn and tap the pan lightly to coat bottom and sides. Invert the pan and tap out excess flour.

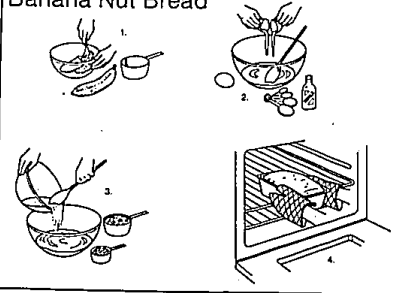
- Add dry ingredients alternately with liquid ingredients. Add the dry ingredients (usually a flour mixture) in four equal parts and the liquid in three parts. Begin and end with the dry mixture. Stir after each addition until all ingredients are well-blended.

- Bake until wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Using pot holders or oven mitts, quickly open oven door and pull rack out. Insert a wooden pick into the center of the loaf and remove it. If batter clings to the pick, bake the loaf a few minutes longer before retesting.

MILDLY SWEET and fragrant, Banana Nut Bread is just right for breakfast, as a lunchbox treat, for snacktime or dessert. A good "first loaf" for beginning bakers, this recipe streamlines the way to buttery flavor and tender texture with squeeze margarine, an easy, convenient product for children to use. One stick of regular margarine may be substituted in this recipe, but it must first be melted then cooled to room temperature before using.

For the best banana flavor, have youngsters use fruit that is very ripe and soft. Bananas that are overripe,

Banana Nut Bread



with spotty, brown skins are just fine — they're the most flavorful and easiest to mash.

BANANA NUT BREAD

1 loaf

About 2 ripe medium bananas
 1/2 cup margarine
 1/2 cup sugar
 2 eggs
 1 tsp. vanilla
 2 cups flour
 1 1/2 tsp. baking powder
 1/2 tsp. salt
 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
 1/2 cup chopped nuts

Take out:
 Glass and metal measuring cups

Straight-edged metal spatula or knife
 Measuring spoons
 Shortening and paper towel
 9 x 5-inch loaf pan
 Small, medium and large mixing bowls
 Fork
 Wooden spoon
 Rubber scraper
 Pot holders or oven mitts
 Wooden pick
 Wire cooling rack

1. Grease and flour loaf pan. In small mixing bowl, mash bananas, one at a time, using fork. Measure 1 cup mashed bananas.
2. In large mixing bowl, combine

margarine and sugar. Blend in eggs and vanilla. In medium mixing bowl, combine flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt and cinnamon.

3. Add flour mixture to large bowl alternately with bananas. Mix well after each addition. Stir in nuts.

Four into prepared pan.

4. Bake at 350 degrees, 55 to 60 minutes or until wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Remove pan of bread from oven. Cool 5 minutes on wire cooling rack. Remove bread from pan and continue cooling on wire cooling rack.

PEANUT BUTTER ranks high on any list of kids' favorites. Peanut Lover's Bread, a hearty quick-bread loaf that's chock-full of peanut butter, will rate rave reviews — especially when slices are spread with grape jelly.

The rich flavor of this luscious loaf is enhanced with buttery tasting margarine, which contributes to the tender texture, as well. Have junior bakers soften margarine to room temperature before combining with other recipe ingredients for easy mixing. This will take about 30 minutes after removing it from the refrigerator.

Explain to boys and girls that proper storage is necessary to retain the moist texture and great flavor of any quick-bread loaf after serving. The bread must first be completely cooled. If it will be eaten within a day or two, have youngsters slip it into a plastic bag, press out air and close the bag with a twist tie. For longer storage, have them wrap the bread securely in moisture/vapor-proof wrap and freeze.

PEANUT LOVER'S BREAD

1 loaf

1/2 cup margarine
 1 cup sugar
 1/2 cup chunk-style peanut butter
 2 eggs
 2 cups flour
 2 tsp. baking powder
 1 tsp. salt
 1 1/4 cups milk

Take out:
 Cutting board and small sharp knife
 Metal and glass measuring cups
 Spatula
 Measuring spoons
 Shortening and paper towel
 9 x 5-inch loaf pan
 Large and medium mixing bowls
 Wooden spoon
 Pot holders or oven mitts
 Wooden pick
 Wire cooling rack

1. Grease 9 x 5-inch loaf pan with shortening.

2. In large mixing bowl, beat margarine and sugar until light and fluffy, using wooden spoon. Blend in peanut butter and eggs. Combine flour, baking powder and salt in medium mixing bowl. Add flour mixture to large bowl alternately with milk, mixing well after each addition.

3. Pour into prepared pan. Bake at 350 degree, 60 to 65 minutes or until wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean.

4. Remove pan of bread from oven. Cool 5 minutes on wire cooling rack. Remove bread from pan and cool completely on wire cooling rack. Serve with grape jelly.

Fresh produce adds sparkle to wild rice salads

Greet the warm weather with fresh, exciting mealtime ideas. Put aside winter's hearty soups and stews and look to the lighter fare based on the wide selection of fresh produce now available.

Fresh produce adds mealtime sparkle no matter how it is prepared and served, but it captures the true taste of spring when served as a creative salad.

No longer the standard greens

with dressing, salads today combine intriguing flavors and textures with creative ingredient selections. Vegetables, fruits, meats, cheeses and rice make an endless menu of salads with meal-appeal.

This prepare-ahead refreshing salad would be a welcome accompaniment for a favorite grilled poultry or fish.

SPRINGTIME WILD RICE SALAD

THE EMPHASIS is definitely on fresh in Springtime Wild Rice Salad. The asparagus and bell pepper add gorgeous bright colors and the seasoned mixture of nutty wild rice and tender long grain rice add flavor and texture to this chilled accompaniment salad dressed simply with oil and wine vinegar dressing.

2 1/2 cups water
 1 pkg. (6 oz.) long grain & wild rice
 1/2 lb. asparagus, cut diagonally into 1-inch pieces
 1/4 cup vegetable oil
 2 Tbsp. white wine vinegar
 1 small red or green bell pepper, cut into 1/4-inch pieces
 Red onion rings

Combine water and contents of rice and seasoning packets in medium saucepan. Bring to a boil. Cover and simmer 20 minutes. Stir in asparagus. Cover and continue to simmer until all liquid is absorbed, about 5 minutes. Transfer to bowl. Cover and chill. Combine oil and vinegar; stir into rice mixture. Add pepper; mix well. Chill. Garnish with red onion rings. Makes 6 servings.

BEST EVER WILD RICE PICNIC SALAD

2 1/2 cups water
 1 pkg. (6 oz.) long grain & wild rice

1/4 cup vegetable oil
 2 Tbsp. cider vinegar
 1/2 cups finely chopped onion
 1 cup sliced celery
 5 radishes, sliced
 1 cup diced cucumber

Combine water and contents of rice and seasoning packets in medium saucepan. Bring to a boil. Cover and simmer until all liquid is absorbed, about 25 minutes. Transfer to bowl. Cover and chill. Combine oil and vinegar; stir into rice. Add onion and celery; mix well. Chill. Stir in radishes and cucumber before serving. Makes 6 servings.

Spice hints perk up food's natural flavor

Well-chosen seasoning can mean more than the difference between a flavorful meal and one lacking zest. Informed use of herbs and spices can help you save cooking time and enhance your family's health in the process.

precipitate the need to store them properly.

Experimenting with herbs and spices can reveal ways to flavor foods without cholesterol, calories or sodium. First, though, it's necessary to become knowledgeable about ways to use familiar spices and to introduce yourself to the more exotic ones.

One way to accomplish that task is by mounting a spice chart on your kitchen cabinet door. You'll learn flavor-enhancing tricks, such as adding allspice to your chili or sprinkling a dash of ginger into chicken soup.

As you begin to acquire a variety of different quality spices, you'll ap-

AFTER A careful and painstaking harvest, the intensity of fine spices can be captured only through proper processing and packaging. Cryogenic grinding, grinding while frozen — for example — is a state-of-the-art process that enhances strength, content and staying power of the spice oil, the flavor key. Since quality spices are carefully cultured, harvested and processed, they require proper storage to keep them at their best.

Follow these guidelines for proper storage of spices: Choose the most airtight container; a bottle with a tight-fitting lid is most suitable. Cardboard and tin containers are not as airtight as they may appear.

Store herbs and spices in a closed cupboard to protect them from sunlight and humidity.

A quick quiz on fiber

ANSWERS

1. (a, b, c) In a healthy adult, each approach will contribute to helping lose weight. The most successful program will usually combine all three.

2. (a) Experts on nutrition and weight loss suggest 30 to 40 grams is a good daily intake of fiber. The average American consumes 10 to 20 grams a day.

3. (a) Because fiber is not digested, its associated calories are not stored as fat. Fiber acts like a spongy material that absorbs and holds water in the stomach, resulting in a feeling of satisfaction.

4. (b) Raw fruits and fiber supplements and also raw vegetables and whole grains are good sources of dietary fiber.

How well do you know the facts about why fiber can help you lose weight? Taking this little quiz can help you tell.

1. Reaching your ideal weight means balancing what you eat against what your body uses for energy. You can do this by: (a) reducing your calorie intake (b) increasing exercise and no change in eating patterns (c) increasing your fiber intake.

2. The average American gets (a) too much (b) just enough (c) too little fiber in his or her daily diet?

3. How much of the fiber you consume does your body convert to fat? (a) none (b) half (c) all.

4. Some good sources of dietary fiber are: (a) red meat and chicken (b) raw fruits and fiber supplements (c) cheese and plain yogurt.

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