



Cosmic Cinnamon Swirl Cupcakes

By Erin Fletter

Prep Time 40 / **Cook Time** 20 / **Serves** 4 - 6

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

swirl: to create a swirl design by lightly stirring a food with a toothpick, or other cooking or eating utensil, in a circular or other pattern.

toast: to brown and crisp food in a heated skillet or oven, or in a toaster.

wet vs dry: to mix wet and dry ingredients separately before combining them: dry ingredients are flours, leavening agents, salt, and spices; wet ingredients are those that dissolve or can be dissolved (sugar, eggs, butter, oils, honey, vanilla, milk, and juices).

whip: to beat food with a whisk or mixer to incorporate air and produce volume.

whisk: to beat or stir ingredients vigorously with a fork or whisk to mix, blend, or incorporate air.

Equipment

- Muffin pan
- Paper cupcake liners (optional)
- Medium mixing bowl
- Large mixing bowl
- Dry measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Liquid measuring cup
- Whisk
- Toothpicks or fork for swirling

Ingredients

Cosmic Cinnamon Swirl Cupcakes

- 1 1/4 C all-purpose flour **** (for GLUTEN ALLERGY sub gluten-free/nut-free flour + increase milk and sugar—more info below)****
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1 egg **** (for EGG ALLERGY sub oil + increase baking powder—more info below)****
- 1/2 C whole milk **** (for DAIRY ALLERGY sub dairy-free/nut-free milk)****
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract **** (for GLUTEN ALLERGY use certified gluten-free pure vanilla extract, not imitation vanilla flavor—check label)****
- 1/2 C sugar
- 1/4 C + 2 to 3 T vegetable oil
- 1/4 C brown sugar
- 1 T ground cinnamon

Food Allergen Substitutions

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Gluten/Wheat: For 1 1/4 C all-purpose flour, substitute 1 1/4 C gluten-free/nut-free all-purpose flour + increase milk to 1 C + increase sugar to 3/4 C. Use certified gluten-free pure vanilla extract, not imitation vanilla flavor.

Egg: For 1 egg, substitute 1/4 C oil + increase baking powder to 1 T.

Dairy: Substitute dairy-free/nut-free milk for whole milk.

Instructions

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preheat + measure + mix + whisk

Preheat the oven to 375 F. Into a large mixing bowl, measure and add **1 1/4 cup flour**, **2 teaspoons baking powder**, and **1/4 teaspoon salt**. Mix together! In a separate mixing bowl, crack **1 egg** and whisk it. Then add **1/2 cup milk**, **1 teaspoon vanilla extract**, **1/2 cup sugar**, and **1/4 cup oil** to the beaten egg, and whisk!

combine + stir + grease + scoop + swirl

Add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients and gently stir to combine, careful not to overmix. Grease a muffin pan (or line with paper cupcake liners) and scoop batter into the wells (fill them about halfway). Make the Cinnamon Swirl (next step) and add a teaspoon of the mixture to the middle of each unbaked cupcake, then use a toothpick or tines of a fork to swirl it into the batter.

cinnamon swirl + bake

In a small mixing bowl, mix together **1/4 cup of brown sugar, 1 tablespoon cinnamon, and 2 to 3 tablespoons oil**. Add a teaspoon of this mixture to the top of each cupcake before baking, then swirl with a toothpick or tines of a fork to create a "galaxy" design. Bake cupcakes for 15 to 18 minutes, or until an inserted toothpick comes out clean. Drizzle with Dreamy Glaze and Asteroid Cinnamon Crunch (see recipes)! They're out of this world!

Featured Ingredient: Cinnamon!

Hi! I'm Cinnamon!

"Did you know that I'm a spice that comes from the inner bark of certain trees?! You can add me to both sweet and savory foods. Recipes generally call for ground cinnamon, but you can also use cinnamon sticks, dried strips of my bark that curl into a tube shape, to flavor apple cider, stews, curries, and more. Just don't forget to remove the stick before serving! And, what's more, I can make your kitchen and home smell wonderful!"

History

Some people say the best kind of cinnamon, referred to as the "true cinnamon" and called Ceylon, is native to an island southeast of India called Sri Lanka. It has a more subtle flavor than other types. The most common cinnamon in use today, though, is derived from Cassia, which originated in China.

Cinnamon is an ancient spice. It was imported to Egypt in about 2000 BCE. The ancient Egyptians used cinnamon together with myrrh to embalm the dead. They considered cinnamon to be more valuable than gold!

Anatomy & Etymology

Cinnamon is the inner bark of some tree species of the genus *Cinnamomum*. Cinnamon trees can grow about 60 feet tall.

Cinnamon farmers begin to harvest cinnamon when the tree reaches two years old. They cut the tree back so that shoots form from the stump. After one more year, the farmers strip the outer bark from the shoots and set the peels out to dry in the sun.

When the bark dries, it curls into "quills," which are the sticks that are cut and sold as cinnamon sticks. They can also be ground into powdered cinnamon, which is how much of the cinnamon we see is sold in stores. So, what do a porcupine and a cinnamon tree have in common? They both grow quills! The word "cinnamon" comes from late Middle English derived from the Old French form, "cinnamome," from the Greek "kinnamon." The Greek was borrowed from a Phoenician word, which was similar to the related Hebrew word "qinnāmōn."

How to Pick, Buy, & Eat

Cinnamon is harvested twice a year, immediately after the rainy season. The humidity in the air makes the bark peel more easily.

The bark is typically peeled by hand by skilled peelers.

The quality of cinnamon is judged by the thickness of the bark, the appearance of the quills (broken or whole), the aroma, and the flavor.

Cinnamon is a spice used to add flavor to a variety of dishes. For example, it may be added to desserts, chocolate, toast (in cinnamon sugar), fruit (especially apples), roasted veggies, soups, tea, and hot cocoa. It's also good in savory dishes like Bavarian pot roast, Moroccan chicken, and Indian curry.

Nutrition

It is best to eat cinnamon in small doses in its ground form, sprinkling it on top of food or adding a small teaspoon to food. Eating too much cinnamon could cause adverse health effects.

Cinnamon has one of the most recognizable scents. Its pungent, spicy smell is due to the chemical called "cinnamaldehyde." This chemical is considered an antioxidant that has some anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties.

Cinnamon is believed to regulate the sugar in our blood and possibly lower cholesterol; however, study findings aren't clear.

Cinnamon oil can keep mosquitoes away! It kills mosquito larvae and probably repels adult mosquitoes, too.