

# The super-filling USDA muffin recipe that Works like a tummy tuck!



Top belly-fat researchers are sharing a recipe for muffins that are delicious, heart-healthy—and proven to make waists shrink!

Here's the sweetest weight-loss news we've reported in a long time: Thanks to a breakthrough recipe created in the USDA's Metabolic Kitchen, it's now possible to melt our muffin tops with... *muffins*. "People find these muffins to be delicious," promises University of Maryland's Michael Miller, M.D., who helped test the sweet, moist, chocolate-and-walnut-studded baked goods. He adds that, in spite of their yumminess, the treats proved surprisingly effective. Simply by eating three of them a day (and aiming to cut about 300 calories elsewhere to compensate), folks dropped up to 30 pounds—much of it in the form of health-threatening belly fat. "Many of our study subjects had never been successful in losing weight until participating in this study," Dr. Miller says. "Results were impressive!"

## Making muffin magic!

Dr. Miller and his University of Maryland team admit they weren't expecting their study to turn out the way it did. They actually tested two different muffin recipes, one made with monounsaturated fat (the type found in olive oil) and the other made with polyunsaturated fat (the type found in safflower oil). "Previous studies have touted the benefits of olive oil, so we thought that the group given that type of fat would do better overall," he says. "But it turned out that the polyunsaturated group lost more weight and decreased waist size more."

In fact, they *doubled* their weight loss and belly-fat loss! The safflower-muffin group also saw significantly greater improvements in blood pressure, triglycerides and blood-vessel health. To figure out why, "we delved deeper into old studies," says Dr. Miller, author of *Heal Your Heart: The Positive Emotions Prescription to Prevent & Reverse Heart Disease*. The experts soon came to the conclusion that while safflower oil may be colorless, odorless and flavorless, it still packs a big punch!

## How safflower muffins slim

Yummy muffins were basically used to entice people to enjoy safflower oil regularly, admits Dr. Miller. "I don't think people would have complied nearly as well if we'd added the oil to a less appealing food," he adds. That said, safflower oil still gets most of the credit due to benefits like these:

**● Blasting hunger!** The University of Maryland's muffin study found that test subjects enjoying safflower muffins saw increases in a hormone called PYY, which "sends a signal from the gut to the brain telling us we are full," explains Dr. Miller. "The higher your PYY levels after a meal, the sooner you want to stop eating." No wonder test subjects reported shrinking appetites!

**● Targeting belly flab!** Everyone in the University of Maryland study got equal-calorie muffins and followed the same dietary guidelines. So why did folks eating safflower-oil-enriched muffins help shrink waists so much more? Ohio State research has shown that safflower oil boosts production of adiponectin, a hormone that "seems to favor fat metabolism and increase fat burning in the abdominal region," says OSU's Martha Belury, Ph.D. On top of that, "safflower oil is believed to activate enzymes that break down fat," says Dr. Miller. So more ab flab gets destroyed.

**● Blocking new fat storage!** Adiponectin has also been found to help the body better control blood sugar and insulin, a hormone that aggressively stores excess blood sugar in fat cells. "In our study, safflower oil lowered blood-sugar levels by an average of 11 to 19 points," says Belury. Insulin function improved, too. Both are factors that help block accumulation of new fat and also "signal the body to utilize stored fat for energy," Belury says.

## "Like a tummy tuck!"

When Baltimore mom Cynthia Woodlyn, 45, volunteered for Dr. Miller's study, "I wasn't sure I'd like the muffins—but it turns out I *loved* them. And they satisfied my desire for dessert, so I wasn't tempted by fattening stuff like cookies and ice cream!" Cynthia, who failed twice at Weight Watchers and could only manage short walks due to arthritis, was thrilled to drop a dress size with ease! Minnesota mom Sheree Curry, 48, was also excited. After testing the muffin approach for *Woman's World*, "I'm amazed at losing seven and a half pounds in a week. The only other time I ever lost that much in a week was when I was working out nearly three hours a day," she says. "And I noticed such a difference in my stomach over the course of the week, it was like I had a tummy tuck! I still have a way to go, but I'm really pleased. If you're like me and get impatient with slow weight loss, the quick results will make you very happy!"

## Get healthy with safflower oil!

Whether you get safflower oil from muffins or simply use it as your new go-to cooking oil, your body will thank you. Ohio State University researchers found that women who added safflower oil saw a 19-point reduction in fasting blood-sugar levels and a 14% increase in good cholesterol. They also saw an 18% drop in signs of internal inflammation—a problem linked to heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, Alzheimer's and a host of other serious health problems. Future research is planned to help pinpoint how safflower oil works such wonders.

## Eat muffins, lose weight!

Using muffins to fight belly fat is easy. Just whip up the recipe, *below*, and enjoy one mini muffin per meal (immediately before, during or after the sitting—whichever you prefer). Folks in the University of Maryland's study were also advised to cut about 300 calories a day from their usual fare to compensate for the muffins. Since safflower oil naturally reduces appetite, the test subjects ended up averaging about

1,500 calories per day (not counting the muffins). A free food log app—such as SparkPeople or Lose It!—will make it a cinch for you to enjoy your favorite foods while hitting that same 1,500-calorie target. Our nutrition team has come up with sample meals to get you started—and we've even shown you how to sneak in more safflower oil for bonus benefits! Aim to drink plenty of water. As always, get a doctor's okay to try any new plan.

## Breakfast menu:

1 Flat-Belly Mini Muffin  
Your favorite breakfast foods  
(up to 300 calories)



**SAMPLE BREAKFAST 1**  
2-egg omelet with veggies and a little cheese prepared with 1 tsp. safflower oil  
1 piece fruit

1 mini muffin

**SAMPLE BREAKFAST 2**  
1 cup plain Greek yogurt, 2 Tbs. sliced almonds, 1-2 servings fruit  
1 mini muffin

## Dinner menu:

1 Flat-Belly Mini Muffin  
Your favorite dinner foods  
(up to 600 calories)



**SAMPLE DINNER 1**  
2 slices pizza, side salad with 1 tsp. safflower oil and vinegar to taste  
1 mini muffin

**SAMPLE DINNER 2**  
1 slice turkey meatloaf, 1 baked potato with 1 tsp. butter, 2 cups green beans sautéed in 1 tsp. butter or safflower oil  
1 mini muffin

## Snacks and extras:

Your favorite snacks and extras  
(up to 200 calories)

**SAMPLE SNACK 1**  
6 oz. glass wine, 12 almonds

**SAMPLE SNACK 2**  
6 cups popcorn popped in 1 tsp. safflower oil



## Lunch menu:

1 Flat-Belly Mini Muffin  
Your favorite lunch foods  
(up to 400 calories)

**SAMPLE LUNCH 1**  
1 McDonald's Bacon Ranch Grilled Chicken Salad, low fat dressing  
1 mini muffin

**SAMPLE LUNCH 2**  
3 oz. sliced turkey, 1 slice cheese, lettuce, mustard on 2 slices whole-grain bread; 1 cup vegetable soup  
1 mini muffin



## Flat-Belly Mini Muffins!

Here's the exact recipe created by the USDA and tested at the University of Maryland:

- 1 cup safflower oil
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup Egg Beaters
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 1/4 tsp. baking soda
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/2 cup mini chocolate chips
- 1/4 cup chopped walnuts

● Preheat oven to 325°F. Lightly coat two mini muffin pans with cooking spray.\* Mix all ingredients together. Fill each muffin cup with 1 Tbs. batter. Bake 10-12 minutes or until baked through. Cool. To maximize freshness, use doubled storage bags to freeze any muffins you won't consume within 2 days. Defrost in wrapping at room temperature overnight. Makes 48 mini muffins.

\*You may also bake in batches.



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IT WORKS!

## Holly speed-shrunk her muffin top!

"My belly has always been a trouble spot," says Holly Dykstra, R.D., a nutrition pro who agreed to test the University of Maryland's plan for us. While far more restrictive diets had failed to satisfy Holly's hunger or shrink her "muffin top," safflower-based muffins (plus well-balanced meals) did the trick. "It seemed odd that I could eat chocolate-chip muffins and lose weight, but the muffins really cut my hunger—plus they were tasty and gave me a nice bit of sweetness so I didn't crave dessert," says the Michigan mom, 32. She lost 2.5 inches of ab flab in just seven days. "The muffins work!"

### Holly's best tip:

- Make 'em fresh! "I kept the batter in the fridge and baked small batches of muffins every few days as I needed them."

