

Loving cups

Time to find the muffin tin, that seldom-used kitchen staple kept on hand for the occasional cupcake-baking frenzy — and not much else.

Turns out, it's a great tool for making breakfast, lunch, dinner and appetizers.

Fresh off the press this month are two cookbooks offering hundreds of recipes based on this humble pan.

Brette Sember's "The Muffin Tin Cookbook: 200 Fast, Delicious Mini-Pies, Pasta Cups, Gourmet Pockets, Veggie Cakes, and More" offers 200 ideas, from Reuben pies to ravioli lasagna.

Matt Kadey's "Muffin Tin Chef: 101 Savory Snacks, Adorable Appetizers, Enticing Entrees and Delicious Desserts" suggests creations such as baked eggs in prosciutto cups and lasagna rolls.

Sember's book was released two days earlier than Kadey's, and both authors blogged about their experiences with the pan. Both books have credentials to back them up: Sember's co-author, Melinda Boyd, is a registered dietitian, as is Kadey.

Why a muffin tin? Sember was inspired by a Betty Crocker children's cookbook she used as a child, which offered a meat-loaf recipe baked in the 12-cup pan.

"I think it's really a fun way to cook," the

Buffalo, N.Y., resident said during a phone interview. "For a lot of people, cooking doesn't feel like fun. I think if you can make it fun and something your kids think is exciting and interesting, it makes it a lot easier to head into the kitchen and make dinner, you know?"

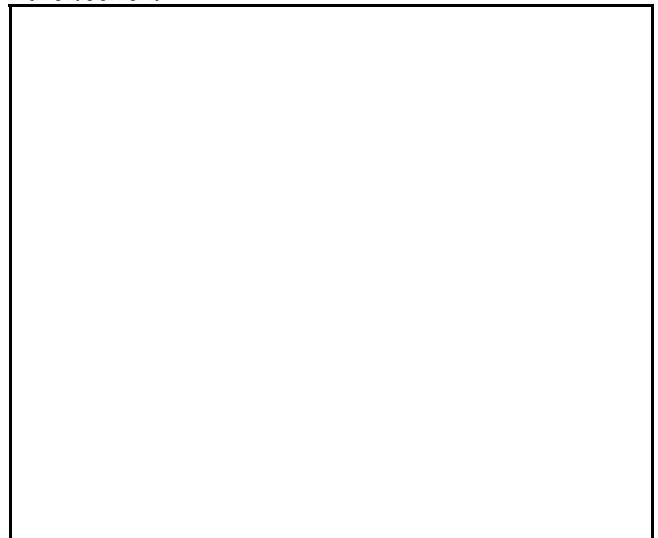
Cute and (usually) round, muffin-shaped meals are portable, easy to pack and kid-friendly, she said.

"Kids think that anything made in a muffin tin is going to be fabulous, because they're raised on cupcakes and muffins and those are terrific treats," said Sember. "So kids automatically think it's going to be a special treat."

And, said Sember, the muffin tin offers automatic portion control. Her recipes are accompanied by nutritional information and the calorie counts.

"You know exactly what you're getting," Sember said.

Advertisement



Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

The muffin tin also makes it easy to make a lot of portions all at once, especially handy for the breakfast rush: egg crescent cups, ham-and-egg cups, or French toast for a crowd.

Yes, Sember offers muffin recipes, too, including several you've likely never tried before, like kiwi muffins with glaze, maple bacon muffins and pistachio orange chocolate chip muffins.

Muffin tins come in a variety of sizes, and Sember's cookbook offers recipes for each, mini to jumbo. Spritz the pan with a non-stick baking spray or line the cups with paper or silicone liners. Sember especially likes the flexible silicone liners which can be washed and reused.

While testing the recipes, Sember discovered she could use edible liners: refrigerated pie crust, crescent dough, biscuit dough, rice paper and even thin slices of ham.

In developing his muffin tin cookbook, Kadey said he became a fan of muffin-sized individual pizzas.

"Once I figured out how to best fit the dough into the cups, I started playing with all sorts of classic and not-so-classic pizza combinations," Kadey said in an e-mailed response to questions. "One of my favorite recipes in the book is for a butternut muffin tin pizza.

"And silicon muffin trays are wonderful for frozen muffin-sized treats," Kadey added.



 Zoom
 Mo-cheese smokey chicken cups is one of the recipes by "Muffin Tin Chef" Matt Kadey. For recipe, turn to B2. / PHOTO/MATT KADEY

Advertisement



Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™