

*Recipe by Julia Heffelfinger*

## **Secret Veggie Mini Muffins**

Makes about 48 mini muffins



These snackable mini muffins are a cross between zucchini bread and chocolate chip banana bread, each bite naturally sweetened with ripe bananas and our gooey medjool dates. They're an excellent lunchbox addition because of their packable size and kids will love the chocolate chips and sweet dates, but won't even notice the shreds of zucchini throughout. You don't have to squeeze the liquid from your squash—the extra moisture helps keep the muffins soft and tender. I like to use muffin liners because they help retain the moisture in your baked goods, but you can also use non-stick cooking spray to grease the pan. If you do not have a mini muffin pan, this recipe will yield about 16 standard muffins. See the Note below for instructions.

Non-stick cooking spray, for greasing, or paper muffin liners

2 cups all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon baking powder

½ teaspoon baking soda

1 teaspoon. kosher salt

1 teaspoon cinnamon

½ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg

2 extra-ripe bananas

¾ cup milk

2 large eggs

2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract

2 cups chopped, pitted [Rancho Meladuco](#) Medjool dates (16 to 18 dates)

1 stick unsalted butter (8 Tablespoons), melted and cooled

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2 cups shredded zucchini (about 1 medium zucchini)

½ cup mini semi-sweet chocolate chips, plus more for sprinkling (optional)

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F. Line two 24-cup mini muffin tins with cupcake liners or grease with non-stick cooking spray (alternatively, you can bake the muffins in two batches).
2. In a large bowl, whisk the flour with the baking powder, baking soda, salt and spices.
3. In the bowl of a food processor or blender, combine the bananas with the milk, eggs, vanilla, and 1½ cups of the chopped dates. Puree until almost smooth (some chunks are OK).
4. Fold the banana mixture into the dry ingredients until just combined. Add the melted butter and stir to combine. Fold in the zucchini, chocolate chips, and the remaining ½ cup of chopped dates. If possible, let the batter sit at room temperature for 30 minutes.
5. Fill each muffin cup with one heaping tablespoon of batter (it should be all the way to the top). Sprinkle with more mini chocolate chips, if desired.
6. Bake the muffins at 375°F for about 15 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center of a muffin comes out with a few crumbs. Remove the muffins from the oven and let cool for 5 minutes in the pan, then transfer to a wire cooling rack to cool completely. Enjoy!

**NOTE** This recipe will make about 16 standard size muffins. Proceed with the recipe as written through step 5. Bake the muffins 425°F for 5 minutes, then, with the muffins still in the oven, reduce the temperature to 350°F. Bake for about 15 minutes more or until a toothpick inserted in the center of a muffin comes out clean. Remove the muffins from the oven and let cool for 5 minutes in the pan, then transfer the muffins onto a cooling rack and let cool completely. This initial high temperature will help you get lofty, bakery-style muffins.

**MAKE AHEAD** The muffins can be stored at room temperature in an airtight container for up to 5 days, or in the freezer for up to 1 month. Thaw at room temperature as needed.