Cooking Peaches, Preserved, Baked and Delicious

Cooking Peaches- The Ultimate Summer Fruit

Summer fruit brings to mind tomatoes, nectarines, plums, peaches and more. My favorite remains peaches. For sweetness and aroma cooking peaches can’t be beat. Preserving this summer goodness is easy. While you’re at it, save enough to enjoy now with ice cream, fruit toppings, fresh fruit salsa and in baked goods.

Start with fresh ripe peaches with little to no overly ripe soft spots. Choose for the delicious aroma, also. Whether you grow your own or buy from the local farmer’s market, harvesting and buying and cooking peaches, at the peak of the season will give you the best taste and texture.

Preparing Peaches for Canning or Freezing

Soft fruits, such as peaches, tomatoes and nectarines are easy to prepare for canning or freezing. Once the fruit has been quickly blanched in a simmering pot of water,then, removed to a pot of ice cold water, the skin slips right off. The peach often practically splits open for easy removal of the pit. The peach halves can be canned as is, in a simple syrup or plain water. Or, you can slice, dice or chunk the peaches. Add a tablespoon or two of lemon juice or citric acid, to keep the fruit from browning. Mix to distribute the lemon juice throughout the fruit.

At this point, you can place the peaches into freezer bags or into canning jars. I use a slotted spoon so I don’t get a lot of liquid in with the peaches I am freezing. Freezing is easy but has a shorter shelf life than canning due to possible

freezer burn. I use a sturdy zip lock style freezer bag, removing as much air as possible. I flatten out the peaches into a single layer in the bag, which makes it easier to stack the bags in the freezer. When ready to enjoy, thaw the peaches in the bag in a refrigerator.

Using the Skins

(note: if you have farm animals or chickens that you like to treat to your kitchen scraps, be aware that pits and seeds can be toxic. I do not feed peach pits to my farm animals for this reason. The skin however, is a welcome tasty treat)

Canning Peaches to Enjoy Later

Fill the jars with the cut up or sliced peaches. Add the peach juice and boiling water to fill the jar within a half inch of the top of the jar. Wipe off the rim of the jar with a clean wet cloth. Add the flat lid and the band to close the jar.

Process canned peaches for 25 minutes for pints and 30 minutes for quarts in boiling water in the Water Bath Canner. Look for other recipes such as brandied fruits, peach jam and jelly and peach pie filling to use your peaches with, also. Since peaches are a high acid fruit,(pH under 4.5) you will can most peach recipes using a hot water bath canner.

Other High Acid Fruits

Apples, peaches, tomatoes, nectarines, citrus fruits, pears and berries fall into the category of high acid fruits. It is important to use an approved canning recipe when using a hot water bath canner, because the acidity must be in a certain range. If you add non-acidic ingredients to the peaches, the total acidity will be lower, making it unsafe to can using a water bath canner.

Dehydrating/Drying Peaches for Storing

Peeled peaches can also be dried or dehydrated for long term storage. I use an electric dehydrator, but you an also use a sun oven for the same purpose. Store your dehydrated peaches in an air tight container or mason jar with a tight fitting lid. Use the dehydrated peaches in trail mix, and bake into cakes, or eat plain.

Eat Fresh!

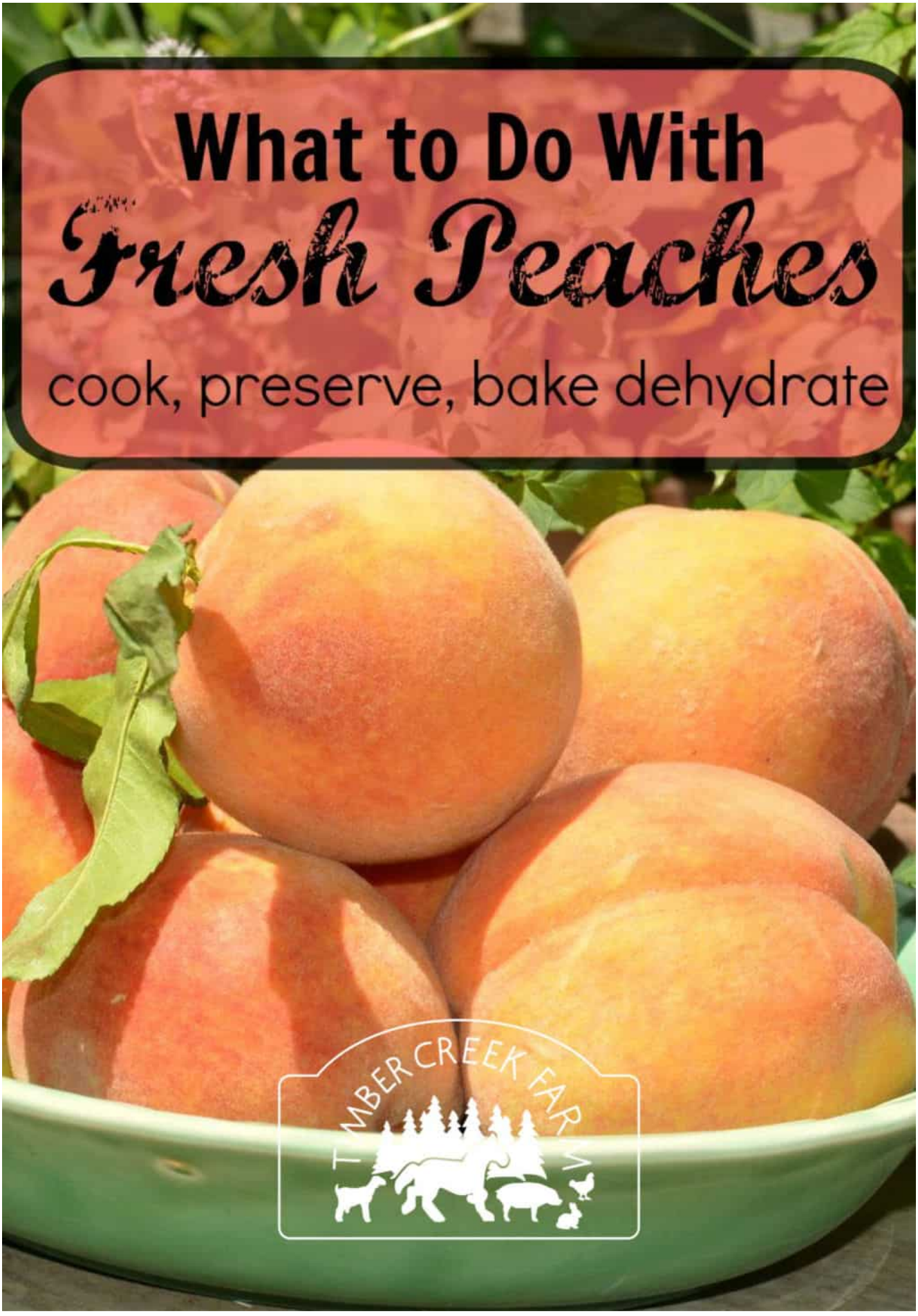
While you have the abundance of good fresh peaches in front of you, don’t forget the obvious opportunity to enjoy them fresh. Serve peeled sliced peaches with ice cream, cereal, plain, and keep a few on hand for lunch boxes. We prefer our peaches cold from the refrigerator but they can sit in a bowl on your counter or table, taking a turn at being a summer decoration, too. Grab one as you run out the door, for a healthy snack. Cooking fresh peaches into a thick topping is delicious when added to homemade vanilla ice cream!

Baking with Peaches

As you can imagine, cooking peaches is amazing when baked. This will be a delicious way to enjoy the harvest. Peaches taste and smell like summer. The cakes, pies, crumbles, cobblers, quick breads and triffles you make with your fresh peaches will prolong the taste of summer. Preserving the peaches from the season gives you the chance to enjoy peach pie and peach cake for any occasion, all year long.

The Recipe

When I was on an extended stay in Georgia one summer, when my little Georgia Peach granddaughter was born, I really enjoyed baking for her family. I came up with a peach cobbler recipe one day, by melding together a few different recipes from the internet search. Some weren’t quite what I was looking for and some were just full of ingredients that we didn’t have on hand. I came up with an experimental cobbler that turned out to be very popular! After all, isn’t this what Grammas do? One trick I learned while developing the cobbler recipe was to precook the filling for a set time, and then add the top crust batter. This resulted in a more crispy and less soggy crust on the cobbler. It also kept the crust from over cooking.


What to Do With
Fresh Peaches
cook, preserve, bake dehydrate
TIMBER CREEK FARM

Georgia Peach Cobbler

for printable version of this recipe click here

FOR THE PEACHES

1. 10 – 14 peaches, peeled, pit removed and sliced
2. 2 teaspoons citric acid or 2 tablespoons lemon juice
3. 1/4 cup white sugar (generously full)
4. quarter cup packed brown sugar
5. 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
6. 1 tablespoon all purpose flour

FOR THE CAKE TOPPING

1. 1 and 1/2 cup all purpose flour

2. 1/4 cup white sugar (generously full)
3. packed brown sugar -1/4 cup
4. 1 and 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
5. 3/4 teaspoons salt
6. 1/2 cup chilled butter cut into small pieces
7. 1/4 cup boiling water

FOR THE TOPPING

1. sugar – 1/4 cup
2. 1 and 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
3. 1/8 teaspoons nutmeg (optional)

PREHEAT OVEN TO 425 F.

1. Using a large bowl mix the peach slices and the citric acid together.
2. Add the sugars, cinnamon, and flour.
3. Stir to evenly coat the peaches.
4. Pour the peaches into greased 2 quart baking dish or 7 x 9 baking pan.

BAKE FOR 10 MINUTES

FOR THE CAKE TOPPING

1. combine flour, both sugars and baking powder and salt
2. mix in the butter with a pastry blender or two forks.
3. continue to mix until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs
4. add the boiling water and mix until just combined
5. Remove the peaches from the oven and drop the cake topping in spoonfuls all over the top of the peaches.
6. Sprinkle the cinnamon, sugar and nutmeg mixture over the whole dish

BAKE UNTIL TOPPING IS GOLDEN BROWN ABOUT 30 MINUTES

1. cool 10 minutes in pan
2. serve warm

More about Peaches!

Peach Butter – Attainable Sustainable

Peeling, Canning and Drying Peaches – Common Sense Homesteading

Spiced Brandied Peaches – Homespun Seasonal Living

Peach Jam Two Ways – Common Sense Homesteading

Georgia Peach Cobbler – Timber Creek Farm

September is National Organic Harvest Month and to help you make the most of your harvests, In 2015 I teamed up with these other amazing bloggers. Please be sure to check out their tips and more: Rachel from Grow a Good Life – Kathie from Homespun Seasonal Living – Teri from Homestead Honey – Chris from Joybilee Farm – Susan from Learning and Yearning – Shelle from Preparedness Mama – Angi from SchneiderPeeps – Janet from Timber Creek Farm

What to Do With Fresh Peaches

cook, preserve, bake dehydrate

Sourdough Muffins with Berries and Bananas

Sourdough muffins will change your life. Your breakfast life anyway. I used the natural rising power of sourdough. Then I added traditional muffin ingredients, and came up with a light, flavorful and totally yummy sourdough muffin!

At the time of writing, our country is experiencing shortages of some products. Making sourdough muffins allows you a delicious baked treat without using a lot of ingredients in one baking session. Sourdough has become the darling of the baking scene because yeast is hard to find.

Enter Sourdough Baking

Happily, I have been baking with sourdough for many years. As time went on I became more adventurous about converting recipes from traditional baking methods to sourdough baking. Pancakes, breads, pretzels, and pizza crust all became fermented goodness. And, let’s not forget the unforgettable sourdough cinnamon rolls!

When it became obvious that flour and yeast were not going to miraculously reappear on the grocer shelves, I doubled down on my sourdough feeding and conserved the yeast. Recipes that took over 4 cups of flour were put on the back burner for now. Instead I looked for baking recipes that used less ingredients to make a tasty baked good.

Converting to Sourdough

I converted the sourdough muffins recipe from my daughter’s recipe for low sugar muffins. I was happy with the lightness of the baked muffin and how quickly they mixed up. But the best part is the simple list of ingredients. You most likely have these items on hand in your pantry!

Need directions for making a sourdough starter? Check this post from The Fewell Homestead. You can purchase a dehydrated starter from Alderman Farms here. Axe and Root Homestead offers a live and fresh sourdough starter, too.

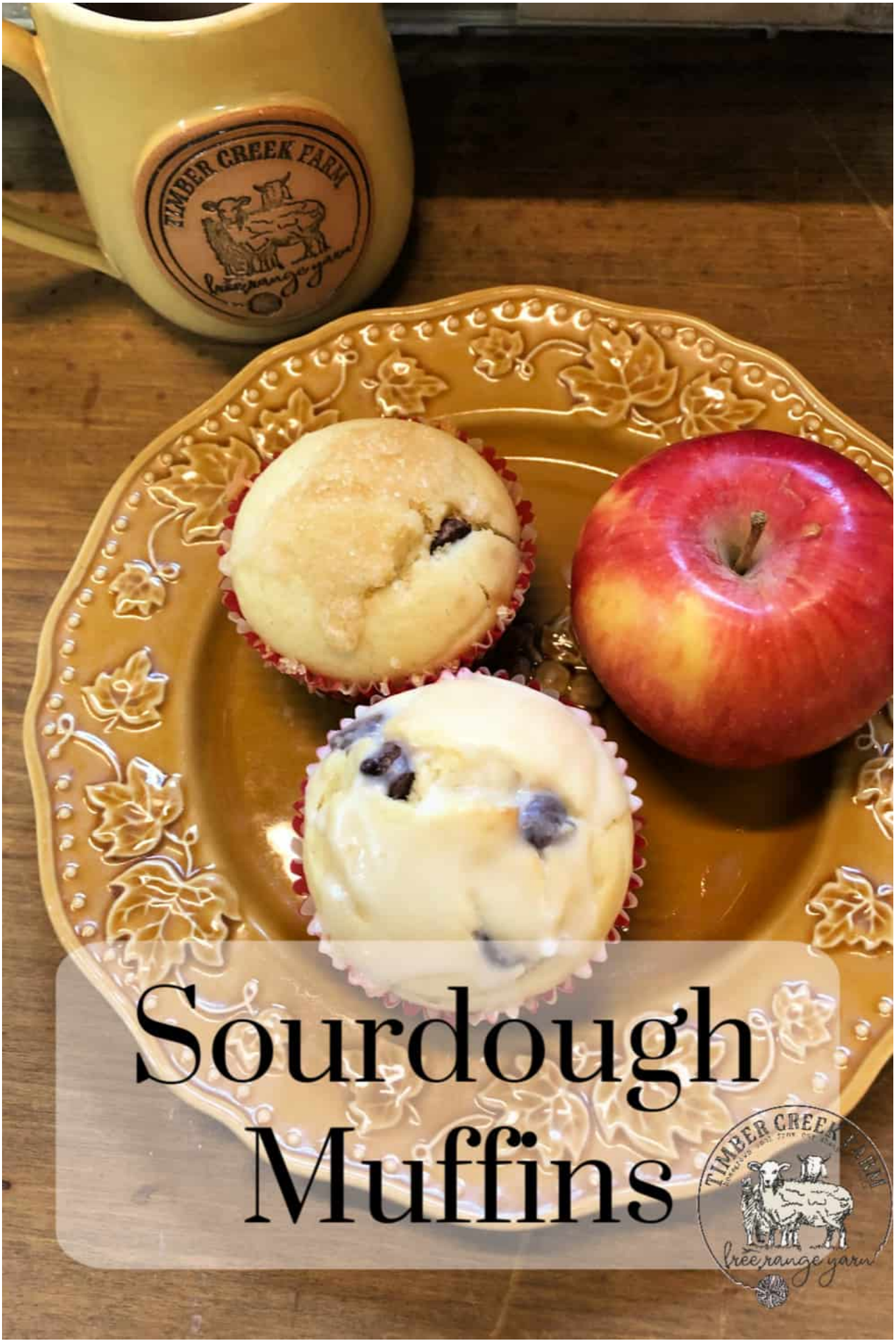
Converting to sourdough often takes a couple of trials. Not all recipes convert the same for me. You don’t want a muffin that is heavy and soggy because you used too much sourdough starter. If you are familiar with the consistency of a muffin or cake batter, that is what you are striving for, just substituting the sourdough starter for some of the liquid ingredients.

The sourdough muffin recipe makes 12 good size muffins. If you

don’t want that many muffins on hand at one time, they freeze well. Cut all the ingredients in half if you really only want a few muffins.

Sourdough Muffins Recipe

You’ll find the full recipe, including a print version, on Homestead Scratch Cooking. Hop on over to grab the Sourdough Muffins with Berries and Banana recipe.



Sourdough Muffins

Healthy Tortillas – Easy Homemade Bread

Avoid a trip to the grocery store, I have you covered with this easy healthy tortillas recipe. This is a great recipe even for people who have never before baked any type of bread! Even better, you don't need yeast for this recipe! Aside from being easy to make, these tortillas taste so much better than store bought tortillas and contain no questionable ingredients or preservatives.

Tortillas also freeze well so if you're thinking you don't need 16 tortillas (but trust me, you do!) you can freeze the leftovers and reheat them one at a time. We love these healthy tortillas for tacos with our homemade taco seasoning, fajitas, quesadillas, sandwich wraps, and they even have been enjoyed dipped in seasoned olive oil! So let's get started…

You will need the following:

Stand mixer with dough hook or a medium sized mixing bowl

Large cutting board or baking stone or parchment paper for rolling out dough (optional, a clean counter works also, just sprinkle flour
directly on the countertop before placing the dough on it.)

Rolling pin (Don’t have a rolling pin? Try using a smooth glass
cup or even the heal of your hand could work in a pinch, you just have to get
the tortillas smooshed thin.)

Cast iron skillet

Measuring cup and spoons

Ingredients for Healthy Tortillas Recipe

3 cups all-purpose flour plus extra for rolling

¾ tsp salt

1 tsp baking powder

1/3 cup Olive oil

1 cup water (it’s best if the water is warm but it works fine cold or room temperature also)

Steps for Making Healthy Tortillas

You’ll find the full recipe and steps, including a print version, on Homestead Scratch Cooking. Hop on over to grab the Easy Homemade Tortillas recipe.

Use Healthy Tortilla Recipe In Place of Sandwich Bread

Healthy Tortillas are a great substitute for sandwich bread. Roll up your favorite sandwich ingredients and enjoy. Enchiladas, tacos, taco salad, quesadillas, Tortillas can also be used to make small party sandwiches, pinwheel appetizers, and desserts.

A recipe for using tortillas that I am drooling over is this one for Chicken Tortilla bake. And with it being Easter week at the time of this writing, who wouldn’t like to try an Easter Brunch Bake as a make ahead idea for the buffet.

Kick up the Heat!

A little spice never hurt anyone right? Try this Chile Lime Chicken recipe. Oh my that looks so good! When it’s time to start up the grill try using your tortillas for Grilled Chicken Fajitas. I think you get my point about the versatile healthy tortilla.

Dessert Tortillas!

Brush the healthy tortilla with an egg wash, sprinkle with cinnamon and sugar and bake until crispy. Use the tortilla shell to make apple pies. Here’s an idea. Make smaller tortillas. Push the tortillas into each section of a cupcake pan. Fill with pie filling. Bake until crisp and the fruit filling is hot. Dig in!

Enjoy!

Make
Your Own
Healthy
Tortillas!
TIMBER CREEK FARM
free range yarn

Easy Homemade Rolls for Holiday Dinners

This week I baked some very easy homemade rolls. Our holiday dinners wouldn't feel complete without fresh baked bread, and it's one of the additions to the table that I love to contribute. When my family gathers, I love to spoil them with the foods they remember from growing up. It's how I show them how much they mean to me.

And I don't mean that to say you have to slave away in the kitchen in order to prepare a holiday meal! Not at all. There are many foods that can be prepared from scratch without a huge time investment. Easy Homemade rolls might sound like a long ordeal but trust me, it shouldn't be.

Breaking Bread

Bread is a traditional part of most meals. Historically, bread in some form, has been a part of human diets for many thousands of years. Rich and poor alike consumed bread, although in different forms. White bread was available only to the rich and royals until modern times. Wheat is the most common grain used to bake bread. Wheat contains carbohydrates, protein and important B vitamins.

Fresh baked breads and rolls are comforting too, and make a great gift.

So it’s no surprise that most of us look forward to the aroma of fresh baked bread and rolls on our dinner tables. Thanksgiving is a time to bring out our best recipes. We break bread together and enjoy it as an appetizer or a accompaniment to a delicious dinner.

Lets Get Started

The recipe for easy homemade rolls is one that I have adapted from a recipe for sandwich rolls in an old cookbook.

I make the rolls a smaller size for dinner parties, but you can make them large or small and adjust the baking time accordingly. The Easy Homemade Roll bakes in about half the time that a sandwich size roll requires. Be careful not to over bake. The small size of a dinner roll means it can dry out quickly.

Easy Homemade Rolls

You'll find the full recipe, including a print version, on Homestead Scratch Cooking. Hop on over to grab the Super Easy Homemade Dinner Rolls recipe.

Variations

Make sandwich rolls by dividing the original dough ball into 12 pieces. Continue as above. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes. or until golden brown.

Adapted from an old cookbook for bread machines.

Easy Homemade Dinner Rolls

“Good bread is the most fundamentally satisfying of all foods; and good bread with fresh butter, the greatest of feasts.”
James Beard

Sourdough Apple Bread with Fresh Apples

Sourdough apple bread is versatile and can be made with either fresh apples, frozen or canned. During fall apple harvest it’s great to make this recipe with fresh apples. You can snack on a few slices while making the filling. When winter hits and you want to bake a warm, hearty bread, grab some preserved

apples and continue on with the recipe. It’s great either way.

I recently tried a recipe for Apple Pull Apart Bread by my friend Ann at A Farm Girl in the Making. One thing I never seem to do well is stick to a recipe. I always have to put my own spin on it. In the case of the pull apart apple bread, I wanted to try it with a sourdough batter and fresh apples. The result was delicious!

And not only that, somehow my sourdough apple bread version made enough dough for two loaves! I had to increase the amounts for the filling when I realized that there was so much dough. Either way, you should try this idea. If you don’t have a sourdough starter, use Ann’s version. If you are like me and sort of committed to a sourdough life, I’ve got you covered with the sourdough apple bread version.

Start with the Dough

I use an electric stand mixer to make bread dough. Add all of the ingredients except for the flour and mix using the flat beater. (you will switch to the dough hook later)

Add the flour, one cup at a time. Mix well after each addition. After the first two cups of flour are added you might want to switch to the dough hook. Mix the dough until it is a smooth ball. I knead a few times on a floured surface before letting the dough rise.

Transfer to a greased bowl, turning so the top is greased too. Cover for rising. This can take one hour to up to 5 hours. When the dough is doubled, knead it down and prepare a floured surface.

note- my sourdough starter was made from dehydrated sourdough from Alderman Farms. My starter has been living and thriving on my counter for over two years at the writing of this post and I use it for almost all of our baked goods.

You’ll find the full recipe, including a print version, on Homestead Scratch Cooking. Hop on over to grab the Sourdough Apple Bread recipe.

Sourdough
Apple
Bread
TIMBER CREEK FARM

Enjoy

I hope you enjoy your sourdough apple bread. If you are new to sourdough baking and want more information on getting started, check this post from when I first started.