



# Information

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## **MOLASSES MAKES THE CAKE**

On a snowy winter day, when the kids were home from school, I ventured into the kitchen to make something yummy. Feeling creative I wanted to experiment with a new recipe to see if my children would accept it. Purposely I failed to mention that it was actually good for them. That would spoil the treat since it isn't often that I bake.

My goal was to experiment with the sweetener molasses. I choose molasses because of an interesting research article about sweeteners in the January, 2009 issue of The American Dietetic Association. The article, "Total Antioxidant Content of Alternatives to Refined Sugar," compared the total antioxidant content of natural sweeteners as alternatives to refined sugar. The sweeteners tested were agave nectar, brown rice syrup, barley malt syrup, corn syrup, date sugar, honey, maple syrup, molasses, and a variety of types of sugar (raw cane, white, light brown, dark brown, and turbinado).

There are 3 kinds of molasses – light, dark, and blackstrap. Light is a by-product of the first boiling of sugar cane juice and can be used to top pancakes and hot cereals. Dark is from the second boiling and is used to flavor and darken dishes. Blackstrap is from the third boiling and has a high mineral content containing calcium, magnesium, potassium, and iron. The research cited above discovered another nutritional benefit to blackstrap molasses, it's antioxidant content. Antioxidants help prevent cancer, cardiovascular disease, and other degenerative diseases. Tests revealed it had the greatest antioxidant content, followed by dark molasses, in comparison to the other natural sweeteners. This research motivates me to see if I can find ways to incorporate molasses into my diet.

Before you go and try to replace the sugar in your recipes you should be aware that molasses has a very strong taste. One you have to acquire. You might try using it as a sweetener in a cup of hot tea with milk or adding to a hot cereal like oatmeal or cream of wheat. Complete substitution of molasses for refined sugar is not realistic in baked items because it will change product quality. A realistic approach is to use molasses in part of the recipe which is what I did for the pumpkin cake. It's delicious and packed with Vitamin A. Even better my children loved it and yours will too!

## **PUMPKIN CAKE**

4 eggs  
1 1/2 cups sugar  
1/4 cup molasses  
1 cup canola oil  
1 (15 ounce) can pumpkin  
2 cups all-purpose flour  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
3/4 teaspoon salt  
2 teaspoons cinnamon  
1/3 cup powdered sugar

Heat oven to 350°F. Grease 15 x 10 inch jelly roll pan. In large mixing bowl beat eggs till foamy. Add sugar, molasses, oil, and pumpkin. Beat for 2 minutes on medium speed. Add flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and cinnamon. Beat 1 minute at low speed. Pour into pan and bake for 25-30 minutes. Cool. Pour powdered sugar into sifter to sprinkle on cake.

## **MOLASSES SUGAR COOKIES**

3/4 cup margarine  
1 cup sugar  
1/4 cup mild molasses  
1 egg  
2 cups all purpose flour  
2 teaspoons baking soda  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/2 teaspoon ground cloves  
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger  
1/2 cup sugar

Heat oven to 375°F. In large mixing bowl beat together margarine and 1 cup sugar until creamy. Add molasses and egg and beat until well blended. In a separate bowl sift together flour, baking soda, salt, and spices. Add to wet mixture and mix well. Cover mixing bowl with plastic wrap and place in the refrigerator to chill for 30 minutes.

Form dough into 1 inch balls and roll in sugar. Place on cookie sheet 2 inches apart. Bake for 6 to 8 minutes until golden brown. Take out of oven and let sit for 1 minute before taking off of cookie sheet. Makes 5 dozen cookies.

## ***MOLASSES AND OAT SODA BREAD***

Yellow cornmeal  
1 1/4 cups buttermilk  
1/4 cup mild-flavored (light) molasses  
2 tablespoons vegetable oil  
1 1/2 cups old-fashioned oats  
1 cup raisins

3 cups unbleached all purpose flour  
1/2 cup whole wheat flour  
1 tablespoon sugar  
1 1/2 teaspoons salt  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
1 teaspoon baking powder

Place old-fashioned oats in one plastic sandwich bag and raisins in another plastic sandwich bag. Measure flours, sugar, salt, baking soda & baking powder into a large plastic baggie.

***Directions for Bread:*** (Makes 2 loaves)

Preheat oven to 400°F. Lightly oil large baking sheet; sprinkle with cornmeal. Whisk 1 1/4 cup buttermilk, 1/4 cup molasses and 2 tablespoons oil in medium bowl. Stir in oats; set aside. Mix in dry ingredients in large bowl. Make well in center. Add buttermilk mixture and raisins. Stir until dough comes together (it will be moist). Let stand 5 minutes.

Lightly flour work surface. Scoop half of dough onto surface; knead gently just until no longer sticky, about 30 seconds. Shape into 4 1/2-inch-diameter ball. Repeat with remaining dough. Place loaves on baking sheet, spacing evenly. Using sharp serrated knife, make 2 parallel slashes atop each loaf, about 3/4 inch deep.

Bake loaves 20 minutes. Reduce heat to 375°F. Bake until dark and crusty and loaves sound hollow when tapped on bottom, about 25 minutes. Transfer loaves to rack; cool completely. (Can be made 8 hours ahead.) Adapted from Bon Appétit, October 2000.

## **LIL'S BLUEBERRY GINGERBREAD**

1/2 cup shortening  
1 cup sugar  
1 egg  
2 cups sifted all-purpose flour  
1/2 teaspoon ginger  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1 cup sour milk or buttermilk  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
3 tablespoons molasses  
1 cup blueberries  
3 tablespoons sugar

Cream the shortening and sugar. Add the egg and mix well. Mix and sift together the flour, ginger, cinnamon, and salt, and add to the creamed mixture alternately with the sour milk in which the soda has been dissolved. Add the molasses. Add the blueberries and pour the batter into a greased and floured pan 9x9 square or round cake pan. Sprinkle the three tablespoons of sugar over the batter in the pan and bake at 350° for 50 minutes to one hour. The sugar sprinkled over the top makes a sweet crusty topping when the cake is baked. This cake is delicious warm from the oven, cold and even better when two days old.

Deborah Rhoades, MA, RD, LDN, is a licensed Registered Dietitian and Extension Educator in Family and Consumer Sciences. For more information about the Frederick County Extension Office check out our website <http://Frederick.umd.edu>

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