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Wild Rice Cranberry Muffins with Flaxseeds and Coconut Milk

Naturally Delicious Recipes • Janice Feuer-Haugen

Few people outside of Minnesota ever taste or even see traditional wild rice. Their long, thin “grains,” with their nutty flavor, chewy texture, and nutrient density are quite a delicacy. My husband grew up on a farm in Minnesota. Although he left many years ago, his two sisters still live there. So, each year, we receive a Christmas gift of truly wild, hand-harvested, Minnesota wild rice. Although it resembles rice and is treated, prepared and enjoyed like rice, wild rice is actually unrelated to rice. It is an aquatic marsh grass.



Truly Wild, Wild Rice

Traditional wild rice is gathered by hand by “ricers” in a canoe. In this 19th century image, one woman holds a forked push pole. The other two women each have a wooden flail to knock the rice into the canoe. Finishing the harvested rice involves fermentation, followed by smoke curing, by parching the wild rice over fire, gas or steam heat. This is done to dry the wild rice in order to loosen the chaff, so it can be winnowed away and removed from the kernel. Watch this process on YouTube by searching for: *Dancing and Winnowing Manoomin*.



Traditional wild-rice harvesting • S. Eastman, 1853

Truly, Healthy Wild Rice

Nutritionally, wild rice has more protein, minerals and B vitamins than brown rice. Wild rice has almost twice as much protein as brown or white rice. When cooked, gluten-free wild rice has about 10% less calories than brown rice, and 30% less calories than white rice.

Many people consider truly wild, wild rice to be superior in both flavor and aroma to cultivated wild rice. The cultivated wild rice that most of us know tends to be slightly shorter and thicker than traditionally

harvested wild rice. Plus, there is a huge difference in color. Cultivated wild rice is black, versus shades of gray and brown. Either traditional or cultivated wild rice can be used interchangeably in today’s *Wild Rice Cranberry Muffins*, as well as in all your favorite wild-rice recipes.

☞ Nutrient Dense

Wild rice is considered a whole grain. Recent studies suggest that a diet rich in whole grains strengthens the immune system.

One cup of cooked wild rice contains 3 grams of fiber, just over half a gram of fat, and 7 grams of protein. Wild rice is a complete protein, containing all nine essential amino acids, the building blocks of protein.

Additionally, wild rice ranks lower on the glycemic index than most other grains.

☞ Heart Healthy

Early research shows wild rice to lower cholesterol by helping prevent arterial plaque buildup. Its high-fiber content helps in reversing heart disease.

☞ Antioxidant Source

Evidence of its antioxidant potential is in wild rice’s dark color. It contains the very powerful antioxidant *apigenin*, positively associated with encouraging results in anti-cancer research.

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DIRECTIONS

Tasty, moist and satisfying *Wild Rice Cranberry Muffins* were inspired by the wild-rice muffins that the French Meadow Bakery used to sell at the Minneapolis airport.

Makes 12 muffins

Active time: 30 minutes

Total time: 2 hours (including wild-rice cooking and cooling time and muffin baking time)

INGREDIENTS

Wild Rice

½ half cup traditional or cultivated wild rice, washed, drained
1 ½ cups boiling water
¼ teaspoon salt

Wet Mix

½ cup unrefined coconut oil, melted
1 cup plus 2 tablespoons ground flaxseeds (from ¾ cup whole flaxseeds)
½ cup coconut palm sugar
4 teaspoons molasses
3 large eggs
1¼ cups canned lite coconut milk

Dry Mix

1 ½ cups oat flour (from 1 ½ cups old-fashioned rolled oats)
2 teaspoons baking soda
Rounded 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
Rounded ½ teaspoon sea salt
2 cups cooked wild rice, room temperature
¾ cup dried cranberries (preferably fruit-sweetened)



Cultivated wild rice



Cooked, hand-harvested wild rice



Batter ready to portion



Muffins in pan

- 1) While you wash and drain the wild rice, bring 1 ½ cups of water to a boil in a small saucepan. Stir in the wild rice and salt. Cover the pan and lower the heat so the rice gently simmers for 45 minutes. Fluff the rice with a fork and cook uncovered over low heat for 1 more minute to let any excess liquid evaporate. If some liquid remains after that, drain it off. Let the rice cool to room temperature before adding it to the muffins.
- 2) Heat the oven to 350°. Line a standard-size muffin tin with paper liners.
- 3) If you are using whole flaxseeds, grind them in a blender or spice grinder. Melt the coconut oil.
- 4) In a small mixing bowl, whisk together the coconut palm sugar, molasses, eggs, coconut milk, and coconut oil. Stir in the ground flaxseeds. Set this mixture aside while you prepare the other ingredients.
- 5) If you are using rolled oats, use a blender to make oat flour.
- 6) In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the oat flour, baking soda, cinnamon and salt. Use a rubber spatula to stir in the wild rice and dried cranberries. Make a well in the center of these dry ingredients.
- 7) Pour the wet mix all at once into the well. With a rubber spatula gently fold it into the dry mixture until just combined.
- 8) Fill each muffin cup with a scant ½ cup of the batter.
- 9) Bake for 25 minutes on the middle oven rack. Rotate the pan 180 degrees. Bake for another 5 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center of a couple of muffins comes out clean.
- 10) Remove the *Wild Rice Cranberry Muffins* from the oven. Let them cool in the muffin tin on a wire rack for 10 minutes before removing them from the pan. ■

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