

Cleo Coyle's Corn Muffin Tops

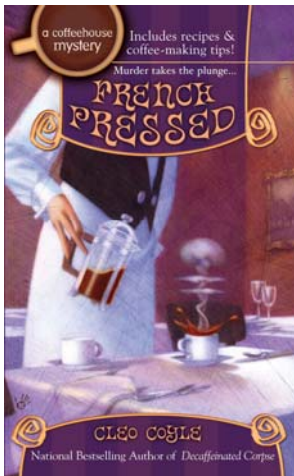
Mix, pour, bake, eat.

Way too easy for something that tastes so good!



"My corn muffin tops are delectable right out of the oven with melted butter sliding off the tops. They're just as good the next day, dunked in a freshly poured cuppa joe."

~Cleo



Cleo Coyle's **French Pressed** (A Coffeehouse Mystery)

This recipe is actually my second involving corn bread. My first—a more traditional recipe—can be found in my sixth Coffeehouse Mystery, *French Pressed*. True, amid my more complicated instructions for Coq au Vin, Raspberry Coulis, Lamb Borscht, and Chocolate Pots de Crème, corn bread seems an oddball entry. But if you read *French Pressed*, you'll see I actually make an important culinary point with the bread. (It has to do with "palate fatigue"—a philosophy of modern gastronomy.)

The corn bread even serves a larger thematic purpose: After my amateur sleuth, Clare Cosi, bakes up a batch and watches another character eat it, she realizes an important difference between the two men in her life. Such is the fun of writing culinary fiction—food television may have food porn, but I get to create food *metaphors*.

To find out more about my mysteries or download more of my recipes, stop by my virtual home: www.CoffeehouseMystery.com

Cleo Coyle's Corn Muffin Tops

Recipe (c) 2009 by Alice Alfonsi who writes as Cleo Coyle with her husband Marc Cerasini

Servings: about 12 muffin tops

Ingredients:

- 1-½ cups all purpose flour
- ½ cup yellow corn meal (*I use Quaker brand*)
- ½ cup sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons baking powder (*for leavening*)
- ½ teaspoon baking soda (*to counteract the acid in the sour cream*)
- 1 extra large egg (*beaten with fork*)
- ¼ cup vegetable oil (*I use canola*)
- ½ cup whole milk
- ½ cup sour cream (*to add a subtle layer of bright tanginess*)

(1) Mix ingredients: Measure out flour, corn meal, sugar, salt, baking powder, and baking soda into a mixing bowl. Add the egg, oil, milk, and sour cream. Stir only enough to blend the ingredients into a smooth, thick batter. Do not over mix or you'll produce gluten in the flour and your muffin tops will be tough instead of tender. Place the bowl in the fridge to chill for ten minutes.

(2) Preheat oven & prepare pan: While the batter is chilling, preheat oven to 425° Fahrenheit. Spray a baking sheet with cooking spray. (You can use butter or oil to grease it if you prefer.) When oven is ready, remove batter from fridge and drop by heaping tablespoons onto the baking sheet as shown in the photo. You want rounds of about 2-inches. These will double in size after baking so leave room between.

(3) Bake: Depending on your oven and the kind of baking sheets you're using, the baking time may be between 8 and 10 minutes. This is a very hot oven, so keep an eye on your batter. You want the rounds to brown just a little around the edges (see my photos) but you do not want them to burn. The rounds will rise in the center, resembling a muffin top, and should be golden in color. Serve the muffin tops warm with butter or allow them to cool on a rack.

Note on Cooling: Do not allow the muffin tops to cool on the hot pan. The bottoms may end up steaming and become tough! Cool them on a rack.

How to store: To store your tops, allow them to cool completely (otherwise moisture will condense and you'll get a soggy product). Wrap in plastic or place in an airtight container and store in refrigerator. They'll keep several days this way.



Eat with Joy!

For more recipe ideas or to find out more about the books in my **Coffeehouse Mystery** series, visit my web site: www.CoffeehouseMystery.com