Oatmeal is a whole grain food with many health benefits. It is rich in fiber, which helps maintain a healthy bowel, lowers cholesterol levels, and promotes heart health. Oatmeal is most commonly eaten for breakfast, but oats can be included in many recipes such as breads, cookies, and even meatloaf! Although instant or quick oats are the best known types of oats, there are many different kinds. Cooking times vary between the different types of oats, but all are healthy!

**Oat groats** are the grain kernels that have been newly harvested, cleaned, had their hulls removed. These take the longest to cook.

**Steel cut oats** are oat groats after they have been cut into smaller pieces with a sharp, steel blade.

**Old-fashioned rolled oats** are created after steaming oat groats and rolling them into fine flakes.

**Quick or instant rolled oats** are the fastest oat to cook because they have been steamed for a longer period of time and rolled thinner.

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**Oatmeal – It’s “Oat” of this World!**

### Selection:
- Choose oatmeal bags that are free from any rips or tears. Rips or tears could mean the product is unsafe to eat.
- Check the “Best by” or “Best if used by” date on the bag. Past this date, the quality may start to decline but should still be safe to eat if stored properly. If the oats develop an off odor, flavor, or appearance, they should be thrown away.

### Storage:
- Store unopened bags in a cool, clean, dry place.
- After opening, keep uncooked oatmeal in a tightly covered glass or plastic container, or place the original package in a resealable plastic bag, for up to one year in the pantry. In hot and humid environments, oats can be stored in the freezer for up to one year.

### Nutrition:
- 1/2 cup of cooked oatmeal:
  - Provides 70 calories and 2 grams of fiber.
  - Contains 3 grams of protein.
  - Is naturally cholesterol- and sodium-free.
  - Counts as one ounce equivalent from the MyPlate grains group.

### Uses:
- Include oats in baked goods such as breads, cookies, and muffins.
- Top cooked oatmeal with berries and nuts and serve with a glass of milk for a filling MyPlate-friendly breakfast.
- For lunch, try a salad with lean meat, beans, or hard-cooked eggs with an oatmeal muffin on the side.
Many nutritious and budget-friendly foods can be kept for a long time in the pantry. Keep these foods stocked in your pantry for easy-to-make, healthy, and inexpensive meals!

- **Oatmeal**, brown rice, and whole grain pasta are packed with fiber and only require water to cook.
- **Dried or canned beans** are all nutritious and loaded with protein and fiber.
- **Peanut butter** is versatile and boosts the nutrition of snacks. Pair with apples or celery, or make a classic sandwich with whole grain bread and your favorite jam or jelly!
- **Canned fruit** and **vegetables** are safe to eat without cooking. Rinse with water to wash away added sugar and salt that comes in the syrups and juices in the can.
- **Canned meat** and **tuna** are perfect for quick sandwiches and make great additions to casseroles or pasta dishes.

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### Baked Oatmeal Muffins

**Serves:** 6  
**Serving Size:** 1 muffin

**Ingredients:**
- 1 1/4 cups water  
- 1 1/4 cups oats  
- 1 egg  
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar  
- 1 tablespoons oil (canola or vegetable)  
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder  
- 1 teaspoons ground cinnamon  
- 2 tablespoons nonfat milk  
- 1 small apple, finely chopped  
- 2 tablespoons dried fruit

**Instructions:**
1. Preheat oven to 350°F.  
2. In a saucepan, bring water to a boil. Add oats and boil for one minute. Remove from heat and let stand for five minutes.  
3. In a mixing bowl, beat these together with a fork: eggs, 1 1/2 tablespoons brown sugar, oil, baking powder, 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon, and milk.  
4. Stir in oatmeal, apples, and dried fruit.  
5. In a mixing bowl, stir together remaining 1/2 tablespoon brown sugar and 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon.  
6. Lightly coat a muffin tin with cooking spray. Divide oatmeal mixture into 6 muffins. Sprinkle brown sugar cinnamon mixture on top of the muffins.  
7. Bake for 30 minutes until the center is set and the top is lightly browned. Let muffins sit for five minutes before serving.  
8. Store leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator or freezer.

**Nutritional analysis (1 muffin):** 130 calories, 4.5g fat, 0.5g saturated, 0g trans, 30mg sodium, 20g carbohydrates, 2.5g fiber, 8g sugar, 3.5g protein

This recipe is courtesy of ISU Extension and Outreach’s Spend Smart Eat Smart website, [http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodscavng/recipes/baked-oatmeal-muffins](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodscavng/recipes/baked-oatmeal-muffins).

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### Helpful Resources

**Polk County Congregate Meals**  
(515) 286-3679

**Commodity and Supplemental Foods**  
(515) 286-3655

**Nutrition, Food Preparation and Food Safety**  
ISU AnswerLine  
1-800-262-3804

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