

EAT BEAT by Martha Wagner

The Breakfast Revolution: more power, more fiber in the a.m.



The American breakfast, once an institution as unchanging as Kellogg's Cornflakes or Aunt Jemima's pancakes, is being updated for the Eighties.

- Egg McMuffins, Croissan'wiches and other restaurant breakfasts, including white tablecloth "power breakfasts" for business execs, now account for 12 percent of all meals eaten away from home. Fast-food restaurant breakfast business increased 72 percent between 1982 and 1985.

- Frozen breakfast foods, from omelets and pancakes to egg enchiladas and toaster strudel, are the fastest growing category in frozen foods.

- The croissant is losing popularity. Rising in popularity are muffins of all kinds, bagels, cinnamon rolls, and that British favorite, scones.

- In cold cereals, eaten in nine out of ten households, the buzz word is bran—and it now comes from a variety of grains. Oat bran, shown in research to lower cholesterol, is an ingredient of several cereals. Good old-fashioned oatmeal can lower cholesterol levels even more when eaten regularly.

Why the breakfast revolution?

There are several explanations for the breakfast revolution. The first has to do with rushed mornings and quick, but boring breakfast choices: cold cereal, one-minute hot cereal, toast and such. Food companies and restaurants realized there was a market for quick breakfasts more satisfying than a Pop-Tart or a new variety of cereal.

More people are sitting down to breakfast today, too, because of the increasing national commitment to healthy lifestyles. A decent breakfast, nutrition experts have been telling us for years, is the healthy way to start the day.

For some Americans, breakfast has always been the favorite meal, a meal associated with comforting, familiar food of the pre-McDonald's era. Cookbook author Marion Cunningham (the revised *Fanny Farmer Cookbook*), now working on a breakfast cookbook, explained to *Food & Wine Magazine* her love of breakfast: "It's such a wonderful meal, an innocent meal. You never see radicchio on the table, no designer food, which I have come to loathe. . . I love breakfast because there is something in it of family and friends."

Nutritionists like Bonnie Liebman, of the Center for Science in the Public Interest, find other things in today's breakfasts: too much fat, too much sugar, too much salt, too much cholesterol.

Eggs a risky business

One egg yolk contains nearly the cholesterol maximum recommended for a day. An innocent looking couple of eggs for breakfast on a regular basis is risky business for many adults, say health experts. Croissants, bacon and many frozen breakfasts are risky eating, too.

Cold cereals, the subject of a survey in the October *Consumer Reports*, are often loaded with salt and fat, as well as the more easily spotted nutritional baddie, sugar. High fiber content is often not what it's cracked up to be. The survey of 59 cereals gave top ratings to two sugar-free cereals from Nabisco, Shredded Wheat 'N Bran and Shredded Wheat Spoon Size, and advised consumers to read the small print on nutrition labels.

Despite the public's growing health awareness, most restaurants continue to equate breakfast with eggs, in one form or another. At home, there are plenty of options for a quick and healthy start to the day. Some examples:

The Healthy Alternatives

- Bagels spread with part-skim ricotta cheese—instead of high-fat cream cheese.

- Breakfast burritos. Re-heat leftover rice and beans or a portion of a dinner casserole, top with grated cheese and wrap in warmed wheat or corn tortillas.

- Tofu Scrambler, instead of scrambled eggs. Add the Fantastic Foods seasoning mix, sold at natural food stores, to crumbled tofu and cook about six minutes. Serve with toast or in pita bread.

- Whole-grain eggless pancakes made from Arrowhead Mills Multigrain Pancake & Waffle Mix. There's corn, wheat, rice and rye flour in the mix, plus buttermilk. All you add is water, and perhaps some frozen blueberries. The mix also makes muffins and biscuits.

- Muesli, the Swiss-style health cereal. Wild-time Foods, makers of Grizzlies Granola, makes one brand (sold in bulk at natural food stores and Shop and Save). It's rolled oats, wheat and rye plus dried fruit and nuts, without the fat and sweeteners of granola cereals. Add fresh fruit and milk or yogurt.

- For toast and muffins, try some of the new no-sugar jams, marmalades and fruit spreads. Sorrell Ridge, Westbrae and Knudsen are three good names to look for. Fruit and fruit juices do the sweetening.

Oats, mentioned earlier as a healthy-heart choice in grains, are wonderful in muffins and pancakes, either as rolled flakes or as flour made from buzzing flakes in a blender. The following muffin recipe comes from a free booklet of oat recipes (for breakfast, lunch and dinner) available on request by writing to Oat Fiber Recipes, Quaker Oats Co., 231 S. Green St., Chicago, IL 60607.

Very Blueberry Muffins

Make a double batch of these and freeze some. The oats provide nice texture and a slightly nutty flavor.

1 and 1/3 cups all-purpose flour*
1 cup Quaker Oats (quick or old-fashioned, uncooked)
1/4 cup packed brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1 cup skim milk
1 egg, beaten (or 1/4 cup egg substitute)
3 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 cup fresh or frozen blueberries

Heat oven to 425 degrees. Spray 12 medium size (8 large size) muffin cups with vegetable oil cooking spray or line with paper baking cups. Combine dry ingredients. Add milk, egg and oil; stir just until dry ingredients are moistened. Fold in blueberries. Fill prepared muffin cups 2/3 full. Bake 25 to 30 minutes or until light golden brown.

Makes 1 dozen medium size muffins.

*Other flours may be substituted, such as whole wheat pastry flour or barley flour.

Note: Try the recipe with buttermilk instead of skim milk; use 1/2 teaspoon baking soda and 2 teaspoons baking powder.

A varied breakfast menu offering everything from quiche and stuffed croissants to bran muffins and hot oatmeal is served weekdays at a new campus area restaurant called **Stuff It**.

The restaurant specializes in pocket bread sandwiches—sandwiches with such names as Pita the Great (a Greek Gyros concoction), Pita Sellers (a falafel special), and Pita Rabbit (the veggie pocket, of course). Also on the menu: soups, salads, New York style cheesecake, baklava, Coffee Corner coffees and cold drinks.

Stuff It is at 1219 Alder St. It's open weekdays from 8 am until 9:30 pm, Saturday from 11 am until 9:30 pm and Sunday from 3 until 10 pm.

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