

# 10 Ways to Cut Calories in Baking Recipes

## 1. Whole-Wheat Flour Takes the Cake

In most bakery-type recipes (muffins, cakes, cookies, coffee cakes, brownies, nut breads, etc.) you can usually substitute whole-wheat flour for half of the white flour. Compared with 1/4 cup of white flour, each 1/4 cup of whole-wheat flour adds 3.5 grams of fiber, various phytochemicals, and double the amount of magnesium and selenium. The extra fiber helps slow digestion and increase fullness.

## 2. Cut the Sugar

In most baking recipes, you can replace half the sugar with Splenda (or a similar product). If you'd rather not use a sugar alternative, you can sometimes just cut the sugar by 1/4 and the recipe will still work out. For each tablespoon of sugar you cut out, you'll save 48 calories. So cutting 1/4 cup of sugar would save you a total of 192 calories.

## 3. Use an Egg Substitute

You can replace half of the eggs in your bakery recipes with egg substitute. Some cake recipes call for three or four eggs; some muffin recipes call for one or two. For each large egg that you replace with 1/4 cup of egg substitute, you'll shave 45 calories, 5 grams of fat, 1.6 grams saturated fat, and 213 mg cholesterol.

## 4. Cut the Fat

In most baking recipes, you can cut the fatty ingredient (butter, margarine, shortening, or oil) by half. So if a cake recipe calls for 1 cup of butter or margarine, you can usually use 1/2 cup instead. Remember to replace that 1/2 cup with a moist but healthful ingredient, and choose an ingredient that complements the flavors of your recipe. My arsenal of secret weapons includes fat-free sour cream, low-fat buttermilk, orange juice, low-fat yogurt, applesauce and other fruit purees, strong coffee, and light cream cheese. Cutting fat cuts lots of calories, as each gram of fat translates into 9 calories (a gram of carbohydrate or protein, by comparison, has 4).

## 5. Use Light Products

Try substituting lower-fat and lower-sugar ingredients in your baking recipes when possible. For example, if you're making a cake that calls for sour cream, use the fat-free version. Also try reduced-fat cheese, light cream cheese, less-sugar jams, light pancake syrup, light Cool Whip, light yogurt, light margarine or whipped butter, and fat-free half-and-half. Most of these products will help you cut calories and saturated fat along with the total grams of fat.

## **6. Cut Down on High-Calorie Extras**

Recipe add-ins and embellishments can sometimes be left out or cut in half. If a recipe calls for chocolate chips, for example, you can reduce the amount. If a recipe calls for dotting your pie with butter, you can safely skip this step. In a cake recipe, you can often get by with half the original amount of frosting (In a double-layer cake, just frost the top and middle and forget the sides). And in some cakes, bars, and cookies, you can eliminate frosting and substitute a light sprinkling of powdered sugar. Using 2 tablespoons of frosting instead of 4 will shave about 130 calories, 4.5 grams of fat, and 2 grams of saturated fat. Each tablespoon of chocolate chips omitted cuts about 50 calories, 3 grams of fat, and 2 grams of saturated fat.

## **7. Keep a Carton of Fat-Free Sour Cream in Your Fridge**

Fat-free sour cream is the bomb in light recipes for three reasons. It's an easy replacement for real sour cream in recipes like pound cake or coffee cake. You can use it as a substitute for part of the fat in recipes for things like cookies (it works especially well for brownies), cake, or muffins. Further, manufacturers often add soluble fiber-like ingredients (such as gelatin, agar gum, xanthan gum, and locust bean gum) to keep fat-free sour cream stable. These ingredients also help keep it from separating when you whip it into your batter or heat it while baking. If your eight-serving recipe calls for 1 cup of butter or oil, and you use 1/2 cup of fat-free sour cream in place of half the butter or oil, you'll save about 110 calories and 13 grams of fat per serving.

## **8. Go Cuckoo for Cocoa**

Cocoa is a great way to add the chocolate flavor to bakery recipes without getting the saturated fat (and calories) found in chocolate chips or chocolate squares. Cocoa has the healthy flavonol antioxidants found in the cocoa bean, too. Look for recipes that call for cocoa instead of chocolate chips or bars, or use 6 tablespoons of cocoa plus 1 tablespoon of canola oil plus 1 tablespoon of fat-free sour-cream instead of 2 squares of unsweetened baking chocolate. For every 2 squares of baking chocolate you replace, you'll shave almost 90 calories and 14 grams of fat (most of which is saturated fat).

## **9. Add Zest to Your Batter With Citrus**

The zest, or outermost layer, of a citrus fruit is full of aromatic oils and flavor. Adding citrus zest is an easy, zero-calorie way to boost the flavor of low-fat dough and batters. I use zest in all sorts of recipes, from muffins, cookies, cakes, and bars to frosting, pies, and pancakes.

## **10. Use Cooking Spray and Nonstick Pans**

Using nonstick pans and dishes and a spritz of canola cooking spray means you'll need less fat in the batter or crust to keep food from sticking. All sorts of nonstick bakeware are available, from springform pans, to cake and muffin pans, to cookie sheets and deep-dish pie plates. When you use one of these pans, your lighter cakes, muffins and tarts will come out nicely brown and won't stick.

Source: WebMD.com