

Double Chocolate Chunk Muffins with Tahini Glaze



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My friend Julee doesn't like muffins. Like, not at all. Please

know, before you start judging the crap outta my friend, Julee, she is one of the greatest human beings of all time. She is an academic support specialist at the school I work at. Her office is right next to mine. We share a love of 90s hip hop, cheese, fried food and Tracee Ellis Ross. She's also my editor on all things including, but not limited to, Huffington Post blog entries, letters to parents, emails to colleagues and my husband's CV. There's literally nothing I wouldn't do for her. So imagine my surprise when I texted her one afternoon, wondering if she was into muffins. I mean, I assumed she would say, 'Of course!', but nope! She said 'no'. What the whaaaaaat? I mean, I've met some weirdos in my day (I went to social work school with a girl who hated soup. Who hates soup!? Its soup!). But not liking muffins? That's crazy talk (the actual conversation, including appropriate Bitmoji, is shown below). So obviously, I mean, challenge accepted.

●○○○○ AT&T

2:41 PM



< Messages

Julee

Details

Word

Yesterday 4:00 PM

How do you feel about muffins?

Not a fan.



Challenge accepted

No! I don't need to like anymore food!

Yesterday 6:20 PM



iMessage







My oldest and I will often spend one afternoon after school doing some baking. In order to make sure we do not eat all the baked goods from our session, I bring the majority of what we baked to work with me the next day. So one day a few weeks ago I brought in Danielle Oron's Tahini Chocolate Chip cookies. Upon eating them, Julee dubbed them the greatest thing I've

ever made (I should clarify that she was already one of my favorite people when she said that but upon hearing her praise, the deal was sealed on her being in the Top 3 Greatest People of All Time). So when she saved my butt one morning last week when I was running late because of kid issues and helped proctor a test that I was supposed to proctor, I promised her I would bake her whatever she wanted. So she asked for the cookies. I said I would make them but then the whole muffin exchange happened and well, this recipe was born. I figured, why not take the flavor profile of the cookies and make them into delicious muffins? She'll love them!



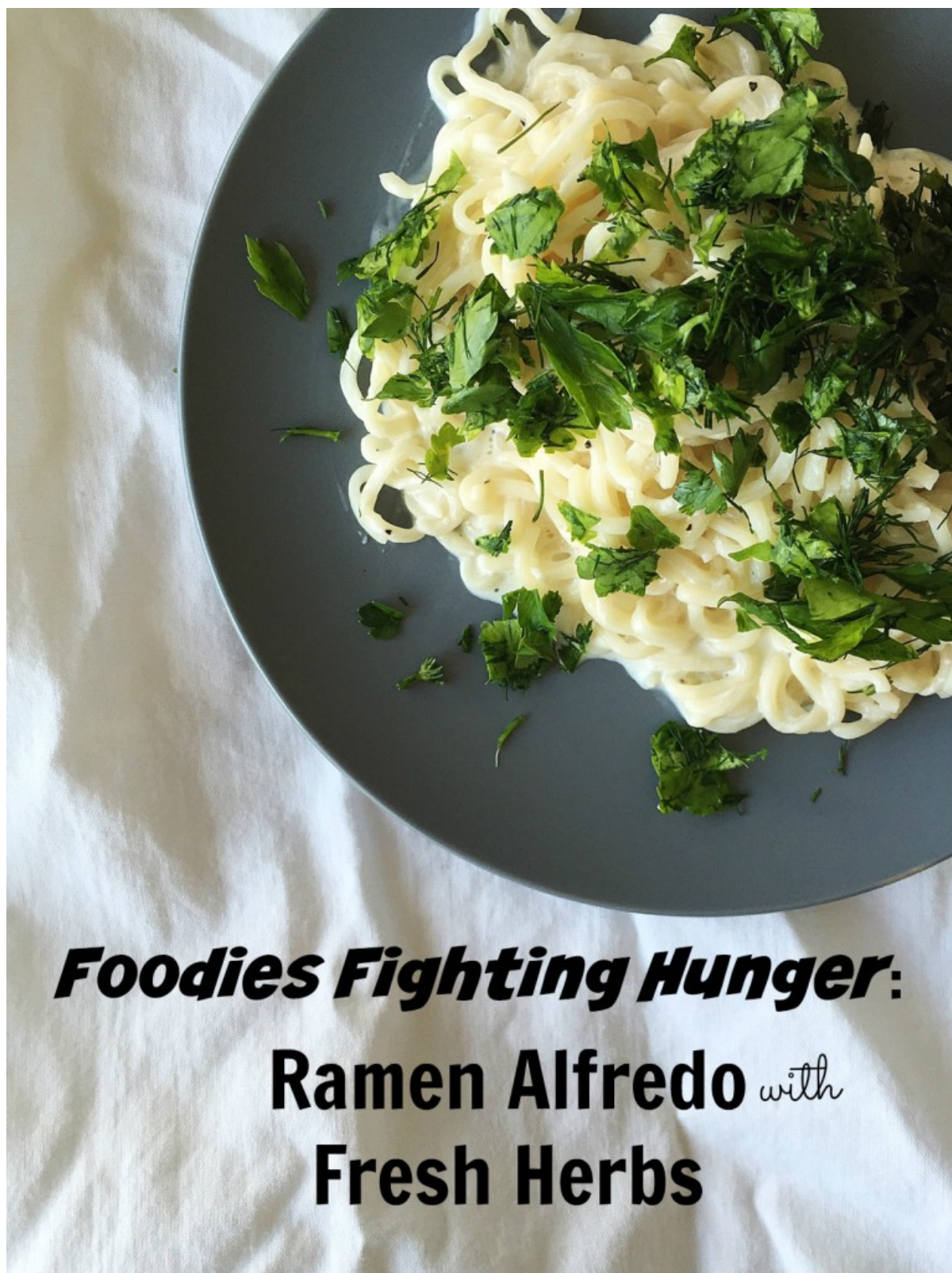
So was she a fan? Well, she liked them enough to eat one, smile and say, "Ok, I like these", but not enough to take home the entire box I brought for her. But my girl, Cheryl? Cheryl loved them! YAY, Cheryl!!! Also, so did my entire

family and every other normal human being. Sorry, Jules. I guess you can't win them all.



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**Foodies Fighting Hunger:
Ramen Alfredo with Fresh
Herbs**



Foodies Fighting Hunger:

Ramen Alfredo *with*
Fresh Herbs

Foodies fighting hunger. What's this all about? Well, a couple weeks ago I gave a little presentation/talk to a few classes at the high school I work at about blogging. During these conversations, I had mentioned a frustration I have for food/lifestyle bloggers who advocate for healthy and/or organic living but never advocate for equal access to the

resources needed to live a health/organic life (much less acknowledge the privilege it takes to live a life full of beautiful acai smoothie bowls and fresh pressed juices). And so, upon reflection, I realized I needed to walk the walk and not just talk the talk; dust off my advocacy skills, if you will. Thus, an idea was born. What if a bunch of foodies got together to acknowledge our privilege, attempt to create a recipe with only \$5 in our pocket, and spread some information on hunger/poverty issues in the US while also providing ways for you, the reader, to do a little advocacy work yourself? And what if we partnered with an incredible organization like MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger, which is a national nonprofit organization working to end hunger in the United States and Israel for **all faiths and backgrounds** in order to make sure we get all the facts and figures right? I'm hoping good things. That's what I'm happening will happen.

Therefore, after a few nudging emails (from me) to almost every food blogger I've ever spoken with and/or wished I have spoken with, a mighty little band of foodie advocates was born. This band of Foodies Fighting Hunger includes the following bloggers (by blog name):

The Kosher Spoon

Foodie Crush

will frolic for food

Dessert for Two

Cooking in Heels

Let's Eat Cake

Cake Over Steak

Hola Jalapeno

What Jew Wanna Eat

Kosher Like Me

Girl Versus Dough

Confident Cook, Hesitant Baker

The Bonjon Gourmet

A Nutritionist Eats

I am very much hoping this will be the first in a series of posts featuring an even wider-range of bloggers advocating for equal access to food and for putting an end to hunger and poverty. I am also appreciate the bloggers who jumped on board right away, even if they had never heard of me, because of their commitment to fight and advocate. I am also especially grateful to MAZON, especially Emily Dingmann, who not only the Communications Director at MAZON but is also the blogger behind A Nutritionist Eats.



A few things of note:

1. I do not live in a food desert. Within a 2 mile radius of where I live in Encino, CA, there is a Trader Joe's, Whole Foods, Ralph's Grocery, a large kosher grocer called, Encino Glatt Mart, and countless other

mini markets. For this post, I chose to shop at Ralph's as it is the most prevalent grocery store in Southern Los Angeles.

2. I have a kosher home, therefore, my ingredient list ran a bit more expensive than the non-kosher versions of the same ingredients. For my family and countless families across the US, keeping kosher is not a 'choice' but a religious commandment/obligation.

Hunger is as prevalent as it is pernicious. It is not restricted only to third world countries or homeless people, but has increasingly become the province of families in highly industrialized nations, including the United States and Israel. The best adjective to accurately describe the amount of food available in the United States is abundant. Hunger affects 1 out of every 7 American men, women and children and persists in this country not because of a lack of food, but because we lack the political will to end the problem by ensuring that vulnerable people have equal access to nutritious food. In California, the State my family now calls home, there are 1,776,465 households who are considered food insecure, a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food (definition grabbed from the US Gov website). In addition, nationally-speaking, there are over 15 million children who struggle with hunger and 22% living in poverty. One of the BIGGEST myths I want to make sure is noted in this post is the myth that government programs enable 'lazy' people to live 'well' on society's dime. This is wholly inaccurate and gets my blood boiling. What a privileged way of thinking. Most folks who I hear these types of sentiments from have usually never experienced a day of food insecurity in their lives. But here's the truth,

"As the nation's economic recovery continues, government programs like SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, aka food stamps) provide a vital lifeline that helps people

receive the sustenance they need to get back on their feet. 40% of households receiving SNAP benefits include at least one working person. The average benefit provided by SNAP equates to roughly \$1.40 per person per meal – hardly an extravagant amount, and certainly not enough to do anything beyond simply get by.” ~ www.mazon.org



More Hunger Facts:

- Hunger myths: there is a stark contrast between the widely held myths and realities about hunger and these myths/realities can shed some light on WHY there is hunger in America if you'd like to touch on that.
- This is Hunger stories: a unique view into the reality of who in America struggles with hunger and why
- Infographics: about hunger (general hunger, seniors, children, rural, SNAP, etc.)
- Interactive map: individual data on how many food insecure households are in your state

Advocacy Opportunities:

- Tell Congress to end hunger for military families now!
- Invest and Improve Child Nutrition Programs
- Educate others: Share this post and other posts involved in this advocacy campaign!
- Sign up to volunteer by yourself or with your family at various local food shelters
- Next time you host a holiday party or birthday party, ask friends to bring a canned good or other donate-able food item instead of a present (or with a present) . . . I love presents.



Underwood Family Farms

When deciding on the ingredients for this post, I decided on the cheap because, well, I only had \$5 to spend and I wanted to stretch every dollar. I also had to get kosher ingredients as we keep a kosher home. I had originally wanted to include a fresh veggie in the dish but after the cost of the dairy

products, I was out of money. But herbs were cheap and still green so herbs it was. I also wanted to included sauteed garlic in butter or olive oil but again, I did not have enough money for this so the only seasonings used were table salt and pepper. The following is the breakdown of the ingredients to my recipe (both kosher and non-kosher cost).

	Kosher:	Non-Kosher:	
			Ramen
	\$.99	\$.39	
Milk	\$1.79	Same	
			Cream Cheese
	\$1.99	Same	
Dill	\$.25	Same	
Parsley	\$.25	Same	

So my kosher total was \$.5.27 and my non-kosher total is just under \$5, coming in at \$4.67. The two items I have yet to calculate are salt and pepper, which would set me back even more but I picked up some free salt and pepper packets at the deli counter so, BINGO! Luckily, this recipe included ingredients that weren't vastly different when it came to cost but that is mainly because I didn't include any real cheese or meat products, which, of course, make every recipe much more expensive regardless of whether or not the dish is kosher or not.



The family, picking veggies for fun.

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