

Prep Time	10 minutes
Cook Time	12-14 minutes
Total Time	22-24 minutes
Yield	24 mini muffins
Difficulty	Easy
Intensity	Low — one bowl, one whisk, no mixer required

These Pecan Pie Mini Muffins are the answer to every “I need a dessert but don’t want to roll out pie dough” moment. Instead of a traditional flaky crust, a quick brown-sugar batter does double duty: it rises into a soft, caramel-like shell while the center stays rich and slightly gooey, just like pecan pie filling. Chopped pecans are folded throughout and pressed on top for crunch. They’re perfect for holiday trays, potlucks, brunches, or a Tuesday night when you want pie flavor in two bites.

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Ingredients

For the muffins:

- 1 cup packed light brown sugar
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup chopped pecans (toasted, if you have time)
- ⅔ cup (10⅔ tablespoons) unsalted butter, melted and slightly cooled
- 2 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon baking powder

Optional add-ins:

- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
 - ¼ teaspoon flaky sea salt, for finishing
 - 24 whole pecan halves, for topping (optional but beautiful)
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Equipment

- Mini muffin tin (24-cup) or two 12-cup mini tins
 - Paper mini muffin liners (or nonstick spray)
 - Mixing bowls
 - Whisk
 - Rubber spatula
 - Cooling rack
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Instructions

Step 1: Preheat and Prep — 3 minutes

Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C). Line a 24-cup mini muffin tin with paper liners, or grease each cup generously with nonstick spray or butter. If using paper liners, a light spritz of cooking spray on the liners helps the muffins release cleanly. Position a rack in the center of the oven so the muffins bake evenly.

Step 2: Toast the Pecans (Optional, but Recommended) — 4 minutes

Spread the chopped pecans on a dry sheet pan and toast at 350°F for 3–4 minutes, until fragrant. Watch closely — pecans go from nutty to burnt in under a minute. Remove and let cool slightly. Toasting deepens the flavor and keeps the nuts crisp inside the soft batter.

Step 3: Whisk the Dry Ingredients — 1 minute

In a large bowl, whisk together the brown sugar, flour, salt, and baking powder until no lumps remain. If using cinnamon, add it now. Breaking up clumps of brown sugar is important — those clumps turn into hard spots after baking.

Step 4: Add the Wet Ingredients — 2 minutes

Pour the melted butter into the dry mixture and stir until combined. Add the eggs and vanilla and whisk vigorously for 30–45 seconds, until the batter is smooth, glossy, and slightly thickened. The batter will look loose at first, then come together into a caramel-colored ribbon.

Step 5: Fold in the Pecans — 1 minute

Using a rubber spatula, fold in the chopped pecans until evenly distributed. Scrape the bottom and sides of the bowl to make sure no pockets of dry flour remain.

Step 6: Fill the Cups — 2 minutes

Divide the batter evenly among the 24 mini muffin cups, filling each about $\frac{3}{4}$ full. An ice cream scoop or a small cookie scoop makes this fast and mess-free. If you'd like, place a whole pecan half on top of each muffin for a polished finish.

Step 7: Bake — 12-14 minutes

Bake at 350°F (175°C) for 12-14 minutes. Intensity check: the muffins should rise and dome slightly, the edges should be deep golden brown, and the centers should look set but still soft and shiny. A toothpick inserted into the center should come out with moist crumbs, not wet batter. If you insert it and it comes out clean and dry, you've slightly overbaked them — they'll still taste great, just less gooey.

Rotation note: If your oven runs hot on one side, rotate the pan 180° at the 8-minute mark. For two pans, bake on the middle and upper-middle racks and swap their positions halfway through.

Step 8: Cool — 5 minutes

Let the muffins cool in the pan for 5 minutes — this allows the centers to set fully. Then transfer them to a wire rack to cool for another 5-10 minutes before serving. They're best enjoyed warm, when the centers are at their gooiest.

Step 9: Finish and Serve — 1 minute

If desired, sprinkle with flaky sea salt just before serving. The salt cuts the sweetness and makes the pecan flavor pop. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Make-Ahead & Storage

- Make ahead: Bake up to 2 days in advance. Store in an airtight container at room temperature.
 - Refrigerate: Up to 5 days in an airtight container.
 - Freeze: Up to 2 months. Freeze in a single layer, then transfer to a freezer bag. Reheat at 300°F for 5–7 minutes.
 - Reheating: A few seconds in the microwave brings back the gooey center.
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Recipe Notes & Tips

- Don't overmix after adding eggs. Whisk until just combined for a tender crumb.
- Measure brown sugar packed. If it's not packed, the muffins will be dry and less caramel-like.
- Butter temperature matters. Melted but not hot — hot butter can cook the eggs and make the batter greasy.
- Mini muffin tins vary. Dark nonstick pans bake faster; start checking at 11 minutes.

- Double the batch easily. This recipe doubles cleanly — use two pans and rotate them halfway.

Nutrition Information

Per muffin (based on 24 muffins, without optional sea salt or whole pecan topping). Values are estimates and will vary by brand and exact measurements.

Nutrient	Amount per Muffin
Calories	~130 kcal
Total Fat	8.5 g
Saturated Fat	3.5 g
Cholesterol	27 mg
Sodium	65 mg
Total Carbohydrates	12 g
Dietary Fiber	0.6 g
Total Sugars	10 g
Protein	1.4 g
Vitamin D	0.2 mcg
Calcium	12 mg
Iron	0.4 mg
Potassium	40 mg