**Foods can fight stress in several ways.** Some foods can reduce levels of cortisol and adrenaline - stress hormones that take a toll on the body over time. A nutritious diet can counteract the impact of stress, by strengthening the immune system and lowering blood pressure.

**Serotonin** is the body’s calming brain chemical and can be boosted by eating complex carbs.Good choices include whole-grain breakfast cereals, breads, and pastas, as well as old-fashioned oatmeal. Complex carbs are digested more slowly and stabilize blood sugar levels.



**Ingredients**

* 1 ½ cups all purpose flour (whole wheat or multigrain is good too!)
* 1 cup quick-cooking rolled oats (not instant)
* ½ cup packed brown sugar
* 1 tbsp baking power
* ½ tsp cinnamon or ginger
* ¼ tsp salt
* 1 cup skim milk
* 1 egg
* ¼ cup oil (or applesauce)
* 1 tsp vanilla
* 1 carrot, grated
* ½ cup chopped walnuts (optional)

**Carrot Oatmeal Muffins**

**Instructions**

1. In large bowl, whisk together flour, rolled oats, brown sugar, baking powder, cinnamon and salt.
2. In separate bowl, whisk together milk, egg, oil and vanilla; pour over dry ingredients. Sprinkle with carrot, and walnuts (if using); stir just until dry ingredients are moistened. Spoon into 12 paper-lined or greased muffin cups.
3. Bake in centre of 375°F (190°C) oven for about 20 minutes or until cake tester inserted in centre comes out clean. Let cool in pan on rack for 5 minutes. Transfer to racks; let cool completely. *(Make-ahead: Store in airtight container for up to 24 hours or wrap individually in plastic wrap and freeze for up to 2 weeks.)*

**Variation:** **Apple Raisin Oatmeal Muffins:** Replace carrot with 1 apple, peeled and grated; replace walnuts with 1/2 cup (125 mL) raisins.

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| **Nutritional Information (per serving)** | | | |
| Calories | 182 cals | Cholesterol | 17 mg |
| Protein | 4 g | Sodium | 145 mg |
| Carbohydrate | 28 g | Fiber | 1 g |
| Total Fat | 6 g | Makes 12 servings | |
| Saturated Fat | 1 g |

Source: <http://www.canadianliving.com/>