

Colonial Recipes

Buttermilk Biscuits

History:

As long as people have known how to make bread, they've been making biscuits. The idea of biscuits goes back to the Romans, but biscuits as we currently know them came about in the Middle Ages, although not mass-produced in any way until the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century. Originally, buttermilk was the liquid left behind after churning butter out of cultured cream; this is now referred to as "traditional buttermilk" to distinguish it from modern buttermilk, which is made from cow's milk. For this particular recipe, we're going to use modern ingredients and make it the Southern way, because few biscuits beat out the Southern buttermilk biscuit.

Ingredients:

2 c unbleached all-purpose flour
¼ tsp baking soda
1 Tbsp baking powder
1 tsp salt
6 Tbsp unsalted butter, very cold
1 c buttermilk (approx)

Directions:

Preheat your oven to 450° F. Combine the dry ingredients in a bowl, or in the bowl of a food processor. Cut the butter into chunks, and cut into the flour until it resembles coarse meal. If using a food processor, just pulse a few times until this consistency is achieved. Add the buttermilk and mix just until combined. If it appears on the dry side, add a bit more buttermilk. It should be very wet. Turn the dough out onto a floured board. Gently, gently pat (do not roll with a rolling pin) the dough out until it's about ½" thick. Fold the dough about 5 times, then gently press the dough down to 1" thick. Handle the dough carefully and as little as possible, or you will have tough biscuits. Use a round cutter to cut into rounds. Place the biscuits on a cookie sheet. If you like soft sides on your biscuits, place them so they touch each other. If you like crusty sides, place them about 1" apart. Bake for about 10 to 12 minutes, until the biscuits are a light golden brown on top and bottom. Do not overbake. Be sure to have a pat of butter ready for your readers, and we recommend getting a locally made jar of apple jam.



Adapted from *Food*, and modified by Leah Angstman.