

Five Easy Recipes Drop Biscuits

One day we decided to ignore the standard instructions for drop biscuits. The result? Best biscuits ever. BY CRISTIN WALSH

THERE ARE TWO basic methods for making biscuits. Rolled biscuits require you to quite carefully incorporate butter or shortening into the dry ingredients, add the liquid (milk, cream, or buttermilk), gently knead into a cohesive dough, roll it out, and cut the biscuits. For drop biscuits, you just melt the butter or shortening, add it to the liquid, and stir this mixture into the dry ingredients. “Drop” this wetter batter onto a baking sheet to form biscuits and pop it into the oven. Done. But if drop biscuits are so easy, why are they often such a squat, gummy, tough disappointment?

Our drop biscuit recipe bakes up tall and tender every time. It calls for butter for flavor and buttermilk for gentle tang. All-purpose flour suits this style of biscuit just fine. Since you don’t roll out the biscuits, you’ve less chance of overdeveloping the gluten and producing tough biscuits—no softer special flours needed. But our most interesting breakthrough was a lucky accident.

Most drop biscuit recipes call for cooled melted butter and room-temperature liquid (in our case buttermilk). When we developed this recipe, we adhered to those temperatures—mostly. On one occasion we got tired of waiting for the butter to cool or the buttermilk to warm up out of the fridge, and we just went ahead and combined the two, temperature be damned. The warm butter instantly clumped in the cold buttermilk, and no matter how much we subsequently whisked the mixture, the butter chunks wouldn’t go away. Wondering what would happen if we proceeded regardless, we stirred the lumpy mixture into the dry ingredients and stuck the pan of biscuits in the oven. Amazingly, they came out higher and fluffier than those we’d been making with the ingredients at conventionally correct temperatures.

Why? The chunks of butter melted in the oven, giving off steam that created rise and resulted in especially light, fluffy biscuits. This interaction is more typical of rolled biscuits, as the pea-size chunks of chilled butter in rolled biscuit dough melt in the oven. By sheer luck, our much easier drop biscuit method gave



This tasty variation is flavored with jarred pimentos and cheddar cheese.

us the same effect.

With this technique in hand, there’s no limit on the delicious variations you can make.

BUTTERMILK DROP BISCUITS

Makes 12 biscuits

To refresh day-old biscuits, heat them in a 300-degree oven for 10 minutes.

- 2 cups (10 ounces) all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup buttermilk, chilled
- 8 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted, plus 2 tablespoons unsalted butter

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 475 degrees. Line rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Whisk flour, baking powder, baking soda, sugar, and salt together in large bowl. Stir buttermilk and melted butter together in 2-cup liquid measuring cup until butter forms clumps.

2. Add buttermilk mixture to flour mixture and stir with rubber spatula until just incorporated. Using greased ¼-cup dry measuring cup, drop level scoops of batter 1½ inches apart on prepared sheet

Bake until tops are golden brown, rotating sheet halfway through baking, 12 to 14 minutes.

3. Melt remaining 2 tablespoons butter and brush on biscuit tops. Transfer biscuits to wire rack and let cool for 5 minutes before serving.

CHEDDAR AND PIMENTO DROP BISCUITS

In step 1 add ¾ cup shredded extra-sharp cheddar cheese and ¼ cup finely chopped jarred pimentos to flour mixture.

MIXED HERB DROP BISCUITS

In step 1 add 2 tablespoons minced fresh basil, 2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley, and 2 teaspoons minced fresh oregano to flour mixture.

MUSTARD AND DILL DROP BISCUITS

In step 1 add 1 tablespoon minced fresh dill to flour mixture and 2 tablespoons whole-grain mustard to buttermilk mixture.

ROSEMARY AND OLIVE DROP BISCUITS

In step 1 add ¼ cup finely chopped pitted kalamata olives and 1½ teaspoons minced fresh rosemary to flour mixture.