



**BISCUITS....**

**Then & Now**



Even back in 1971 everyone was rushed, per the Canned Biscuits lesson from then, but now days we have many frozen choices of biscuits to choose from; Southern, Buttermilk, Flakey and Regular biscuits. Biscuits can be served with white gravy, chocolate gravy, jelly and jams just about any way imaginable, but no matter how they are served, don't forget the butter!

Biscuits are popular as a hot bread for breakfast and other meals. They are a type of quick bread. Biscuits are usually baked in an oven, but if you are on a camping trip, you can use a heavy covered skillet for an oven.

Biscuits can be plain or fancy; part of a main dish; served as breakfast rolls; or made into coffee cakes, desserts, or beaten biscuits. They can be flavored with fruits, vegetables, cheese, meat, herbs, or spices. As fast and easy as you please, you can have biscuits for breakfast, lunch or dinner.

## A Short Biscuit History

The original biscuit was a flat cake that was put back in the oven after being removed from the tin, hence the French name "bis" (twice) "cuit (cooked). The twice baking made the biscuit very hard and dry which made it a staple for sailors and soldiers for many centuries, In the era of Louis XIV, these soldier biscuits were known as "stone bread".

"Animalized" biscuits came next in the evolution of the biscuit. Meat juices were added for the liquid in these biscuits and they were thought to be very nutritious. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century "travelers' biscuits" came about and these were hard cakes that kept well in wrap sort of like tin foil.

The light, feather biscuits originated in the Southern plantation kitchen but are now popular through the United States. In pre-Civil War south a biscuit was considered a delicacy and only served on Sunday. Out of necessity for a quicker biscuit the "cathead biscuit" was born. To make these you simply made your dough, pull apart and drop the clump on a buttered baking sheet. The South having an abundance of sweet potatoes also made biscuits using sweet flour.

Rolled biscuits were the staple of the South but when beaten biscuits were introduced they soon took over the spot as the favorite biscuit of the south. Beaten biscuits are made light by beating air into the dough with a mallet or rolling pin (up to 100 strokes or more for company). Beaten biscuits are thinner and crisper than baking powdered biscuits. We must thank Colonel Sanders and his Kentucky Fried Chicken franchises for introducing the entire world to Southern biscuits!

# What Biscuits Do for You

Biscuits fit in the Bread, Cereal, Rice and Pasta Group of the Food Guide Pyramid. They give you nutrients that are important to your health and provide energy for work and play. The most important nutrients they provide are carbohydrates, fat and B vitamins for energy; calcium for strong bones and teeth; and protein for growth and repair. They also provide minerals including iron. All of the white flour used in making biscuits is enriched. Enrichment means that the nutrients lost in the milling process – thiamin, riboflavin, niacin and iron – have been restored.

## Ingredients for Making Biscuits

Biscuits are made with flour, leavening agents, milk, fat or shortening, salt and sometimes sugar and eggs.

**FLOUR** - Flour made from wheat is the main ingredient. White and off-white (unbleached) flours are made from endosperm of wheat. All-purpose flour is a white flour made from a blend of different types of wheat. This type of flour produces the best results for many products made in the home, including quick breads, such as biscuits.

Whole wheat (also called stone-ground and graham) flour is made from the entire wheat kernel.

Self-rising flour is all-purpose flour with the salt and leavening agent already added for convenience. One cup of self-rising flour contains 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder and 1/2 teaspoon salt. This type of flour works well for biscuits but is not recommended for yeast breads.

**LEAVENING AGENTS** - Leavening agents are substances that help bread dough rise. Biscuits are quick breads made with leavening agents that react quickly. These breads can be baked once and do not require a rising period before baking. Low-sodium baking powder may be purchased if anyone in the family is on a low-sodium diet. The leavening agent most often used for biscuits is either (1) baking soda plus an acid or (2) baking powder. If a recipe calls for soda, it also calls for an acid, such as buttermilk.

**LIQUID** - Milk is needed to moisten the flour, dissolve the salt and permit leavening agents to release gas (carbon dioxide – CO<sub>2</sub>) that helps the bread to rise. Milk also contributes nutrients and helps the bread to brown. Different types of milk work successfully in baking. Whole, reduced-fat, low-fat, reconstituted dry and buttermilk can all be used in making biscuits.

**SHORTENING OR FATS** - Shortening helps make biscuits tender and gives them a flaky crumb. Fats, such as butter and margarine, also add flavor and color. Solid fat is the better choice for a quality biscuit; however, if a family member is trying to cut back on saturated fats, you might try a recipe using oil. Biscuits made with oil are not as light and flaky as those made with shortening or solid fats.

**SALT** - In some recipes, salt is added for its own flavor. In other recipes, salt is used to bring out the flavor of the other ingredients. Salt contains sodium, which some people are advised to limit in their diet. Salt may be reduced or even eliminated in most recipes. Remember that our taste for salt is learned. When you cut back on salt, the product will at first seem bland, but gradually you adjust – and even prefer – this new taste.

# Tips for Baking, Serving and Storing Biscuits

- Use standard measuring cups—liquid and dry - and measuring spoons. Use the back of a table knife or a spatula to level the dry ingredients.
- For best results in baking, sift the flour before measuring it. Most all-purpose flours are now pre-sifted at the mill so that sifting before using is not essential. Pre-sifted flour should be stirred in the canister to lighten it before gently spooning it into a dry measuring cup. Recipes in this publication will recommend sifting to produce a superior product.
- Sift other dry ingredients with the flour to blend them.
- Combine the ingredients in the order given.
- To measure solid shortening, pack it into a dry measuring cup with a spatula. Remove air pockets by running the spatula through the shortening,. Level off with a spatula or knife.
- For tender biscuits, stir the ingredients together just enough to blend. Then turn onto a lightly floured board and knead lightly eight to ten times. Avoid over-mixing or over-kneading, as this will make biscuits less tender.
- To shape the dough, use a lightly floured biscuit cutter. Do not twist the cutter because this tends to seal the edges and prevent the biscuit from rising.
- For a crisp crust, place the biscuits about an inch apart on the baking sheet. For soft biscuits, place them close together on the sheet.
- For a brown finish, brush the tops with milk or butter.
- Bake at the correct temperature.
- Serve biscuits hot for better flavor.
- Cool biscuits before storing. Then wrap them in plastic wrap or foil and place them in a bread box or freeze them either in a freezer container or wrapped with moisture or vapor-proof material.

In 1883, White Lily Flour Company begin making their white winter wheat flour self-rising, it changed the game for the biscuit makers in the South. White Lily is 100% soft winter wheat recipe that uses this type flour.

**Butler's Biscuits** submitted by Jane Chapman via her daughter , Jennifer, that lives in the South. Jane can testify that they are really good served hot or cold, plain or with more butter!

**Bake:** 11 - 12 minutes      **Preheat oven:** 500 degrees      **Yields:** 50 small biscuits

2 lbs. White Lily Self-Rising Flour

1 Quart Heavy Whipping Cream

Gently mix by hand. Roll on floured board to thickness of your hand. Cut out and place on an ungreased pan so they touch each other. Brush with melted butter and bake. Brush with butter after baking, now they are ready to serve.

---

Acknowledgments: University of Kentucky Extension  
4-H Bread Making Lesson  
Southern Living Magazine and Food Reference - Biscuit History

## MINOR LESSON

FEBRUARY, 1971

### USES FOR CANNED BISCUITS

Working homemakers, Women's Lib and even deadlines to meet reduce the time many homemakers have to spend in the kitchen, In an effort to save time and energies, many homemakers have filed the recipes "Grandmother used to make" and have turned to more convenient products.

One good example of this is canned biscuits. Fresh from the dairy case, they are ready to pop in the oven for any occasion, Many 'tasty treats' can be made from these little portions of dough; however, first, consider the product as it's name implies.

#### Canned Biscuits

- a canned refrigerated dough.
- frequently, the product is yeast dough, however, quick bread biscuits are available.
- are packaged in servings which are convenient for two or more servings for several people.
- are easy to prepare and relatively inexpensive.
- may be purchased with toppings, filling or unusual shapes.

#### Remember

In Purchasing: Always check the end of the can to see how long the biscuits will keep without spoilage.

In Storage: Always keep the cans refrigerated. Excess heat will create expansion of the dough. The can will break and the product will be low quality, if baked.

Try these ideas to dress up or even disguise the biscuit you use with butter and jelly!

### DOUGHNUTS

Separate biscuits. Using your thumb, make a hole in each biscuit. Drop in hot fat (375°) and brown until golden on both sides. (2-3 minutes). Remove, drain on absorbent paper, and glaze or coat with sugar. NOTE: If you like doughnut holes, too, use the inside section of the biscuit cutter or a small bottle cap to make the holes.

#### Petite Pizzas

Using a spoon, spread each biscuit until it makes a thin dough circle (4" to 6" across). Top each crust with tomato sauce, oregano and spices to taste. Add cheese, ground meat, etc., according to preference. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese and bake at 400° for 15 - 20 minutes.

### Party Puffs

1 can biscuits (10)  
3/4 stick margarine (6 tablespoons)  
1 package onion soup mix

Cut each biscuit into quarters. Melt butter or margarine and add soup mix. Toss biscuit pieces in butter and seasoning and cook over low heat until golden. Bake on a cookie sheet lined with brown paper at 450° for 5 minutes. Serve hot.

### Puffies

Arrange 1 pkg. bake 'n eat biscuits, slightly overlapping, in 8" pie plate. With fork, beat 1 egg with 2 tablespoons light cream, 1/8" tsp. dry mustard, 1/4 tsp. salt, 1/2 cup grated process sharp cheese or pimento cheese. Pour over biscuits. Bake at 450° F. for 15 minutes. Makes 4 servings. Serve hot.

### Seed Biscuits

Brush top of each bake 'n eat biscuit with melted margarine. Sprinkle with poppy, celery and caraway seeds. Bake as package directs.

### Turnovers

(nice with vegetable juice)

Mix 1 cup grated process sharp cheese with 3 tablespoons melted butter. Roll each biscuit into a 4" circle. Top with some of cheese mixture (or deviled ham); fold in half; seal edges by pressing with fork tines. Bake at 425° F. for 10 minutes.

### Upside-Downs

In bottom of each muffin cup, place one of the mixtures below. Place biscuit on top of mixture. Bake at 425° F. for 15-18 minutes. Let stand 1/2 minute in pan. Invert pan onto waxed paper cool 5 minutes.

### Mixtures for Upside-Downs

Butterscotch nut - in each muffin cup, place 1/2 tsp. melted margarine and 1 tsp. of corn syrup; stir. Arrange three pecans, flat sides up, on top of mixture.

Pineapple - Place 1/2 tsp. melted butter or salad oil and 1 tsp. brown sugar in each muffin cup; stir. Top mixture with 2 tsp. drained canned crushed pineapple.

Orange - Cook 1/2 cup granulated sugar with 1/4 cup orange juice, 1/4 cup margarine and 2 tsp. Grated orange rind for 5 minutes. Pour into 10 muffin cups.

### Quick 'N Easy Bubble Loaf

Use two packages of biscuits. Dip biscuits first into 1/4 cup melted butter, then into 3/4 cup granulated sugar, 3/4 tsp. cinnamon and 1/3 cup chopped nuts, combined. Arrange, overlapping, in greased 9" layer-cake pan or a greased cookie sheet. Bake at 425° F. 20 - 25 minutes.

### Thumbprint Biscuits (filled)

With thumb, make hollow in center of each biscuit; fill as below. Bake at 425° F. for 10 minutes.

Jam - Fill with red jam or jelly; if desired, brush with 1 tablespoon sugar mixed with 2 tablespoons light cream.

Cheese - Fill with cube of cheese.

Orange - Dip small cube of sugar into undiluted frozen orange juice; set in hollow.

### Cheese Pan Biscuits

Top-Ups - Place biscuits close together in 9" pie plate. Stir 1/4 lb. grated process cheese with 1/4 cup melted butter until smooth. Spread over biscuits. Bake at 425° for 15 minutes.

Up-Side Downs - Place 2 tablespoons margarine and 1/4 cup pimento or blue cheese spread in 8" pie plate. Place in oven till partly melted; stir. Arrange biscuits close together in mixture. Bake at 450° F. 15 minutes. Turn out of pan.

### Cinnamon-Nut Rolls (like crullers)

With hands, roll each biscuit into stick 4" long. Roll in melted butter, then in this mixture: 1/4 cup brown sugar, packed; 2 tablespoons granulated sugar; 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon; 1/3 cup chopped nuts. Bake at 425° F. 10 minutes.

### Pastry-Wrapped Savor Sausages (using refrigerator crescent rolls)

Brush about 25 well drained small canned cocktail sausages with soy sauce, mustard, or chili sauce. With pastry wheel cut rectangles of crescent rolls lengthwise in 1/2" wide strips. Wrap strips around sausages spiral fashion, securing ends under by pinching. Brush with beaten egg. Bake in moderate oven (375° F.) 8–10 minutes. Remove to rack. Makes about 2 dozen.

Charlotte Coffey  
Extension Advisor, Home Economics  
Perry County  
January, 1971