



BEATEN BISCUITS

2 cups all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
1 teaspoon sugar
½ teaspoon salt
½ cup unsalted butter, chilled and cut into ½-inch pieces
¾ cup whole or low-fat milk, chilled

Preheat oven 425°F. Lightly butter 2 baking sheets.

In a food processor fitted with the metal blade, combine the flour, baking powder, sugar and salt. Pulse several times to combine. Add the butter and pulse again several times until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs. With the motor running, pour in the milk through the feed tube; continue to process until dough forms a ball.

Turn out the dough onto a lightly floured work surface and knead gently a few times. Pat it out to an even thickness of about ½ inch. Using a round biscuit cutter 2 inches in diameter, cut out the biscuits. Arrange them evenly spaced on the prepared baking sheets.

Bake the biscuits until they are golden brown, 15-20 minutes. Serve hot. Makes about 16 or less depending on how high you want them to be.



PECAN BISCUITS WITH ORANGE-HONEY GLAZE

For an extra burst of orange flavor, mix some unsalted butter with grated orange peel to accompany these homespun biscuits.

FOR GLAZE

3 tablespoons frozen orange juice concentrate, thawed
2 tablespoons honey

FOR BISCUITS

3 cups unbleached all purpose flour
3 ½ teaspoons baking powder
2 teaspoons grated orange peel
¾ teaspoon baking soda
¾ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon ground ginger

¾ cup (1 ½ sticks) chilled unsalted butter,
cut into ½-inch pieces
¾ cup finely chopped pecans (about 3
ounces)
1 cup plain nonfat yogurt
3 tablespoons honey

MAKE GLAZE:

Mix in orange juice and honey in heavy small saucepan; bring to boil. Reduce heat; simmer until slightly thickened, about 3 minutes. Set aside.

MAKE BISCUITS:

Position rack in center of oven and preheat to 425°F. Combine flour, baking powder, orange peel, baking soda, salt and ginger in large bowl. Add butter and rub in with fingertips until mixture resembles coarse meal. Mix in ½ cup chopped pecans. Whisk yogurt and 3 tablespoons honey in small bowl to blend. Add yogurt mixture to dry ingredients; stir with fork until moist dough forms. Turn out dough onto floured surface and knead gently just until smooth, about 10 turns (do not overmix).

Roll out dough to 10-inch-diameter round (about ¾ inch thick). Using 2 ½-inch-diameter biscuit or cookie cutter, cut out biscuits. Gather scraps; roll out to ¾-inch thickness and cut out additional biscuits. Transfer biscuits to large ungreased baking sheet. Brush tops of biscuits twice with glaze; sprinkle with ¼ cup pecans. Bake until puffed and golden brown and tester inserted into center comes out clean, about 18 minutes. Serve warm. (Can be prepared 6 hours ahead. Let stand at room temperature. Rewarm in 350°F oven just until heated through, about 5 minutes.)

Makes 14 to 16 biscuits.



BUTTERMILK BISCUITS

Can be prepared in 45 minutes or less.

3 cups all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
1 ½ teaspoons salt
½ teaspoon baking soda
¼ cup cold vegetable shortening
2 tablespoons cold unsalted butter, cut into bits
1 ⅓ cups buttermilk
an egg wash made by beating 1 large egg with 1 tablespoon water

Preheat oven to 450°F.

In a large bowl whisk together flour, baking powder, salt, and baking soda until combined well. With a pastry blender or your fingertips blend in shortening and butter until mixture resembles coarse meal. Add buttermilk, stirring with a fork to form a soft dough, and with floured hands knead dough gently 4 times in bowl.

On a lightly floured surface pat dough out into a ½-inch-thick round. Cut out as many rounds as possible with a 2-inch round cutter dipped in flour and invert ½ inch apart onto a large baking sheet. Gather scraps into a ball. Pat out dough and cut out more rounds in same manner. Brush biscuits with egg wash and bake in middle of oven 12 minutes, or until golden. Cool biscuits on racks. Biscuits may be made 8 hours ahead and kept, wrapped well, at room temperature. Reheat biscuits, wrapped in foil, before serving.

Makes about 18 biscuits



BAKING POWDER BISCUITS

Light-gold and crusty outside, moist and fine-textured inside

2 cups flour
½ teaspoon salt
4 teaspoons baking powder
1 tablespoon sugar
½ cup vegetable shortening
2/3 cup milk

Preheat the oven to 425° F. Grease two 8-inch cake pans. Put the flour, salt, baking powder, and sugar in a bowl. Cut the shortening into the flour with two knives or a pastry blender until the mixture resembles coarse meal. Add the milk all at once and stir just until the dough forms a ball around the fork. Turn the dough onto a lightly floured board and knead 14 times. Pat until ½ inch thick. Cut into rounds with a 2-inch cookie cutter. Place touching each other in the cake pans and bake for 15-20 minutes.