



Currant Scones

The most sought-after recipe in my Café was this one. Made with any kind of dried fruit they are at once flaky and soft. I prefer to use dried cranberries, dried cherries or currants, but you can even use chocolate chips or butter-scotch chips. I never use fresh fruit or any ingredient that is too wet. It will not allow the scone to cook properly. There is an interesting variation listed at the end of this recipe for a savory scone.

6 cups flour (all purpose or unbleached)
½ cup sugar
3 tablespoons baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
1 lb. butter
4 eggs
1 ½ - 2 cups milk
1 cup currants or other dried fruit (cut bigger fruit into small dice)



Whisk together flour, sugar, baking powder and salt in a large mixing bowl. Cut the butter into small cubes. Cut the butter into the flour mix using a pastry cutter or food processor (with an on/off motion) until the mix resembles a very coarse meal. Toss in the dried fruit. Beat three eggs lightly and combine with 1½ cups of milk. Add the wet mix to the dry ingredients at once and 'toss' until combined. Add a little more milk if it is too dry and will not come together.

Turn out the dough on a floured surface and pound flat (about 1 ½ inches high) into a circle or an oval. Cut into long strips about 2 inches wide. Then

cut each strip on the bias into diamond shapes. If you want to use a round cutter, feel free, just stick the excess dough back together to use it all.

Put the scones on an ungreased baking sheet. Beat the last egg in a small bowl and brush each scone with some of it. Sprinkle a tiny bit of sugar on each



scone. Let sit uncovered for about 10 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees. Place the scones in the middle of the oven and cook for 10 minutes at this temperature. If you have a particularly hot oven, make sure the tops are not burning. Turn the oven down to 300 degrees and cook another 5 minutes. Check for doneness – See hint #4.

VARIATION:

Sauté finely chopped scallions, jalapeno peppers and red peppers in a small amount of olive oil until they are fairly dried out. Cool and add to the scones in place of dried fruit. Instead of sprinkling sugar on the top use coarse ground black pepper. This is a great savory scone to serve with soup or salad for a luncheon treat. Substitute green peppers for the jalapenos if you don't want any heat.

A BETTER BISCUIT

Biscuits are one of the ultimate comfort foods. Rich and buttery and flaky, they have many uses. I use this biscuit dough recipe for everything from

strawberry shortcake to chicken and biscuits. It always seems to please.

6 cups flour
½ cup sugar
3 tablespoons baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
1 lb. butter
2 cups half and half
3 eggs

Whisk together the flour, sugar, baking powder and salt in a large bowl. Cut the butter in small cubes and cut into the dry ingredients. Use a pastry cutter or food processor (see instructions for scones). Beat the eggs and mix with the half and half. Pour the milk and egg mix into the dry ingredients and toss until combined. If the mix seems too dry add a little bit of milk. If it is too wet add a little flour just over the top. Turn out the dough on a floured surface and pound into a circle about 1½ inches thick. Cut with a round cutter sized to your liking. Gather scraps and continue cutting to use all the dough. Set biscuits on an ungreased baking sheet and set aside to rest for 10 minutes.

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Set the biscuits in the oven and cook for 10 minutes. Turn down the oven and check every 5 minutes for doneness – See hint #4.

