

Stuart Oakes' Flaky Buttermilk Biscuits

Makes 12

The dough is a bit sticky when it comes to rolling and during the first set of turns. Note that you will use up to 1 cup of flour for dusting the work surface, dough, and rolling pin to prevent sticking. Be careful not to incorporate large pockets of flour into the dough when folding it over. When cutting the biscuits, press down with firm, even pressure, do not twist the 3-inch biscuit cutter.

Ingredients

- 2 1/2 cups (12 1/2 ounces) all-purpose flour (measure by weight preferable)
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoon vegetable shortening, cut into 1/2-inch chunks
- 8 tablespoons unsalted butter, chilled, lightly floured and cut into 1/8-inch slices plus 2 tablespoons melted and cooled
- 1 1/4 cups buttermilk, chilled (If no buttermilk that add tablespoon lemon juice or vinegar per cup of regular milk.)

Method

1. Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and preheat the oven to 450 degrees. Whisk flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt together in large bowl.
2. Add shortening to flour mixture; break up chunks with fingertips until only small, pea-size pieces remain. Working with few butter slices at a time, drop butter slices into flour mixture and toss to coat. Pick up each slice of butter and press between well-floured fingertips into flat, nickel-size pieces. Repeat until all butter is incorporated, then toss to combine. Freeze mixture (in bowl) until chilled, about 15 minutes, or refrigerate for about 30 minutes.
3. Spray 24-inch-square area of counter with vegetable oil spray; spread spray evenly across surface with clean kitchen towel or paper towel.

Sprinkle 1/3 cup flour across sprayed area, then gently spread flour across work surface with palm to form thin, even coating. Add 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons buttermilk to flour mixture. Stir briskly with fork until ball forms and no dry bits of flour are visible, adding remaining 2 tablespoons buttermilk as needed (dough will be sticky and shaggy but should clear sides of bowl). With rubber spatula, transfer dough onto center of prepared counter, dust surface lightly with flour, and with floured hands, bring dough together into cohesive ball.

4. Pat dough into approximate 10-inch square, then roll into 18 by 14-inch rectangle about 1/4 inch thick, dusting dough and rolling pin with flour as needed. Use bench scraper or thin metal spatula to fold dough into thirds, brushing any excess flour from surface of dough. lift short end of dough and fold in thirds again to form approximate 6 by 4-inch rectangle. Rotate dough 90 degrees, dusting counter underneath with flour, then roll and fold dough again, dusting with flour as needed.
5. Roll dough into 10-inch square about 1/2 inch thick. Flip dough over and cut nine 3-inch rounds with floured 3-inch biscuit cutter, dipping cutter back into flour after each cut. Carefully invert and transfer rounds to ungreased baking sheet, spacing them 1 inch apart. Gather dough scraps into ball and roll and fold once or twice until scraps form smooth dough. Roll dough into 1/2-inch thick round and 3 more 3-inch rounds and transfer to baking sheet. Discard excess dough.
6. Brush biscuit tops with melted butter. Bake, without opening oven door, until tops are golden brown and crisp, 15 to 17 minutes. Let cool on baking sheet for t to 10 minutes before serving.