

The Flakiest English Butter Biscuits: A Step-by-Step Guide to Southern Comfort

There are few simple pleasures in life that rival a perfectly baked biscuit. When I say



OVEN
450°F

TIME
30 min

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INGREDIENTS

Swaps and Notes:

Buttermilk Substitute: If you don't have buttermilk, you can make a quick substitute. Add 1 tablespoon of white vinegar or lemon juice to a liquid measuring cup, then fill it up to the 1-cup mark (240 ml) with milk. Let it sit for 5 minutes before using. The texture might not be quite as rich, but it works in a pinch.

Butter: The key is coldness. If the butter warms up, the biscuits won't rise as high. If your kitchen is warm, you can put the bowl of dry ingredients and butter pieces in the freezer for 5-10 minutes before adding the buttermilk.

Gluten-Free: I have not personally tested this recipe with gluten-free flour, but a good 1:1 gluten-free baking blend should work, though the texture may vary slightly.

Step-by-Step Directions:

Position an oven rack to the center position and preheat your oven to 450°F (230°C). This high heat is crucial for a rapid rise.

Lightly spray a cast iron pan (my preference for crust development) or a cake pan with non-stick spray, or line a sheet pan with parchment paper.

Measure all ingredients, dicing the butter into small cubes. Keep the butter and buttermilk in the refrigerator until the moment you are ready to combine them.

In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and kosher salt.

Add the cold diced butter to the bowl. Use a pastry blender, a fork, or your fingertips to "cut" the butter into the flour mixture. You want to press down on the fat as you move it around the bowl.

Continue until most of the pieces of butter are about the size of peas, with a few slightly larger pieces (walnut half size) remaining. These larger pieces create the pockets of steam for flakiness.

Add the cold buttermilk to the bowl. Stir with a spoon or a silicone spatula just until combined. This should only take a few turns. The dough will be very wet and sticky-do not overmix!

Turn the wet dough out onto a lightly floured counter. Dust the top of the dough with a little flour.

With floured hands, gently bring the dough together into one mass. Do not knead.

Pat the dough out (do not use a rolling pin) until it is about 1-inch (2.5 cm) thick.

Using a bench knife or a metal spatula, fold the dough in half (like a book), and then turn it 90 degrees.

Pat out and fold again. Repeat this process for a total of 6 times. This crucial layering process is what creates flaky biscuits.

Press the dough out one last time to about 1-inch (2.5 cm) thick.

Use a round cutter (about 2.5-inches in diameter) to cut out your biscuits. Crucially: dip the cutter in flour, press straight down, and pull it back up without twisting. Twisting seals the edges and prevents the biscuit from rising fully.

Gently pat the scraps together to cut out any remaining biscuits.

Place the biscuits in the prepared pan with their edges touching. This encourages them to rise up, not out.

Optional Step: Place the pan in the freezer for 10 minutes before baking to ensure the butter is rock-hard for maximum rise.

Bake at 450°F (230°C) for 13-15 minutes until the tops are golden brown. Do not open the oven door for at least the first 7 minutes to trap the steam and assist the rise.

Optional: Immediately brush the warm biscuits with melted butter and sprinkle with flaky salt for extra flavor and shine.

Tips for Success:

Always Use Cold Ingredients: This is the most important rule. Cold butter creates steam pockets as it melts in the hot oven, which pushes the dough up into layers. Warm butter just melts and mixes, leading to flat biscuits.

High Heat is Your Friend: The 450°F (230°C) temperature is non-negotiable. It helps the baking powder/soda activate rapidly and sets the layers before the butter completely melts, ensuring a high rise.

No Twisting: When cutting the biscuits, press straight down. Twisting seals the layers you just created with the folding technique, preventing them from puffing up.

Serving Suggestions and Pairings:

Serve them hot alongside a comforting bowl of chili or my personal favorite, Classic Spaghetti Recipe with Homemade Sauce.

Use them as the base for a chicken pot pie filling or split them and fill with my Easy Cheesy Chicken Sliders with Marinara Garlic Butter filling for a decadent twist.

A side of whipped chive butter or a simple white gravy is always a winner.

Split, toast slightly, and serve with strawberry jam and homemade whipped cream.

Pair them with a refreshing glass of This Blueberry Lemonade is My Favorite Refreshing Drink for Sunny Days.

They're delicious as a vehicle for fruit compotes, like a simplified shortcake.

DIRECTIONS

1. Prep the Oven and Pan
2. Position an oven rack to the center position and preheat your oven to 450°F (230°C). This high heat is crucial for a rapid rise.
3. Lightly spray a cast iron pan (my preference for crust development) or a cake pan with non-stick spray, or line a sheet pan with parchment paper.
4. Measure all ingredients, dicing the butter into small cubes. Keep the butter and buttermilk in the refrigerator until the moment you are ready to combine them.
5. 2. Mix Dry Ingredients and Cut in the Butter
6. In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and kosher salt.
7. Add the cold diced butter to the bowl. Use a pastry blender, a fork, or your fingertips to "cut" the butter into the flour mixture. You want to press down on the fat as you move it around the bowl.
8. Continue until most of the pieces of butter are about the size of peas, with a few slightly larger pieces (walnut half size) remaining. These larger pieces create the pockets of steam for flakiness.
9. 3. Add Buttermilk
10. Add the cold buttermilk to the bowl. Stir with a spoon or a silicone spatula just until combined. This should only take a few turns. The dough will be very wet and sticky-do not overmix!
11. 4. The Layering Fold Technique (The Secret to Flakes)
12. Turn the wet dough out onto a lightly floured counter. Dust the top of the dough with a little flour.

13. With floured hands, gently bring the dough together into one mass. Do not knead.
14. Pat the dough out (do not use a rolling pin) until it is about 1-inch (2.5 cm) thick.
15. Using a bench knife or a metal spatula, fold the dough in half (like a book), and then turn it 90 degrees.
16. Pat out and fold again. Repeat this process for a total of 6 times. This crucial layering process is what creates flaky biscuits.
17. 5. Cut and Bake
18. Press the dough out one last time to about 1-inch (2.5 cm) thick.
19. Use a round cutter (about 2.5-inches in diameter) to cut out your biscuits. Crucially: dip the cutter in flour, press straight down, and pull it back up without twisting. Twisting seals the edges and prevents the biscuit from rising fully.
20. Gently pat the scraps together to cut out any remaining biscuits.
21. Place the biscuits in the prepared pan with their edges touching. This encourages them to rise up, not out.
22. Optional : Step: Place the pan in the freezer for 10 minutes before baking to ensure the butter is rock-hard for maximum rise.
23. Bake at 450°F (230°C) for 13-15 minutes until the tops are golden brown. Do not open the oven door for at least the first 7 minutes to trap the steam and assist the rise.
24. Optional: Immediately brush the warm biscuits with melted butter and sprinkle with flaky salt for extra flavor and shine.
25. Tips for Success: Always Use Cold Ingredients: This is the most important rule. Cold butter creates steam pockets as it melts in the hot oven, which pushes the dough up into layers. Warm butter just melts and mixes, leading to flat biscuits.

SWAPS & NOTES

All-Purpose Flour 240 grams 2 cups Plus more for dusting.
Baking Powder 10 grams 1 tablespoon Ensures a good rise.

Baking Soda ... teaspoon ... teaspoon Reacts with the buttermilk for lift.

Kosher Salt 1 ... teaspoon 1 ... teaspoon Balances the flavor.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

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Warm butter just melts and mixes, leading to flat biscuits.

High Heat is Your Friend: The 450°F (230°C) temperature is non-negotiable.

More recipes: [ChefManiac.com](https://chefmaniac.com)

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/the-flakiest-english-butter-biscuits-a-step-by-step-guide-to-southern-comfort/>