

LUCKIEST BISCUITS in AMERICA

Makes 8 biscuits

Biscuit making is a practice, a recipe you begin to feel rather than follow. Like pie dough, they'll only get better every time you make them, but starting with a great recipe will help. This one does not require a food processor, because I believe flat, shaggy pieces of butter create flakier layers than small, pebble-like bits, and it uses two types of leavening in conjunction with buttermilk for foolproof lift.

3 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting

1 tablespoon baking powder

2 teaspoons kosher salt

1½ teaspoons sugar

¼ teaspoon baking soda

1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, cut into 1-inch pieces, chilled

1¼ cups buttermilk, plus more for brushing

Flaky sea salt, for sprinkling (optional)

1. Preheat the oven to 425°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Whisk the flour, baking powder, kosher salt, sugar, and baking soda in a large bowl. Using your hands, smash the butter into the flour mixture. It should be almost like you're making pie dough (you've made pie dough before, right?), with little bits of butter but no large chunks.
3. Drizzle the buttermilk all over the dry mixture and, using a wooden spoon or, better yet, your hands, mix everything until it comes together in a sort of ball. Knead the mixture a few times in the bowl, making sure to get any of those dry bits at the bottom up into the mix.
4. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured work surface and knead another two or three times.
5. Pat the dough into a 1½-inch-thick rectangle about 12 inches long and 6 inches wide. Cut it in half lengthwise, then crosswise into 4 pieces (you should get 8 biscuits). Alternatively, you can pat the dough into a 1½-inch-thick disk (or whatever shape) and punch out 2-inch circles.
6. Place the biscuits on the parchment-lined baking sheet and brush the tops with buttermilk, letting some drip down the sides. Sprinkle the tops with flaky sea salt, if you're feeling fancy.
7. Bake, rotating once, until the biscuits are deeply, fantastically, wonderfully golden brown on the bottoms and tops, and the sides have puffed up like an accordion, 20 to 25 minutes.
8. Remove from the oven and let cool slightly before destroying.

DO AHEAD

Biscuit dough can be made 2 weeks ahead, wrapped, frozen. You can bake them from frozen—just add 5 to 8 minutes to the bake time.