

# An Unusual Culinary Column: What's For Breakfast? Scones!

By Karen Kain

I love having guests stay at my home. The only problem is trying to decide what to serve for breakfast. I struggle with coming up with new recipe ideas because I am just not a fan of early morning meals. When I am on the road, my favorite thing to eat in the morning is coffee and a scone. At home I normally drink tea, but when I travel I drink coffee. I like my coffee hot, and nothing goes better with a cup of coffee than a crunchy and crumbly scone.

Scones are one of those baked items that everyone talks about being super easy to make. As you may already know, baking is not my favorite thing to do. Although I have made scones a few times before, I always feel as though I am missing something. Could they possibly be just so easy that I am making a big deal out of nothing? This week I decided to have a scone bake off.

You might think that scones originated in England, but they actually got their start in Scotland around the early 1500s. The Scots Gaelic term "sgonn" means a shapeless mass or a large mouthful. The original scone was round and flat, about the size of a dinner plate. It was made with unleavened oats and baked on a griddle, then cut into triangles. Once baking powder became available scones moved to an oven baked treat.

It wasn't until the 1840s that Anna Russell, the 7th Duchess of Bedford, made scones famous. Anna was a lifelong friend of Queen Victoria. Rumor has it, that she is responsible for starting the tradition of serving tea with a light snack in the afternoon. Anna found herself feeling a bit peckish in between lunch and dinner. Her servants brought her tea and some scones. She enjoyed them so much that she requested them to be served to her every day at 4:00 pm. Of course, being British, scones were served with the traditional clotted cream as a topping. One thing led to another and Anna started inviting friends over to join her in her private room. The ladies would enjoy their tea and catch up on the latest events. History suggests that Anna is the woman responsible for making "Afternoon Tea Time" an English tradition.

Scones have been served all over the world for a very long time. In Australia you might find pumpkin scones. In Hungary you would most likely find

savory scones served with different seasonings and toppings like dill and cheese. In the Americas it is traditional to serve them hot and smothered in butter the same way we eat our biscuits. Most generally, in America, scones are sweet and eaten with coffee.

Today, scones are big business, they are made sweet and savory in various shapes; round, square and triangles. They often include dried fruits and other ingredients like raisins, currents, chocolate, dates and even cheese.

After researching the history of scones I felt a little less intimidated and made up a sloppy batch of these coveted breads. Of course I served them warm right out of the oven smothered in butter.

I first tried this Basic Scone Recipe. There was a plethora of recipes to pull from, but I wanted to start easy and work upwards. I actually found that this recipe was my favorite of the three. I loved the texture; the scone was crumbly and crunchy on the outside but moist in the middle. I think the sour cream and only using one egg is the reason for their lovely turn out. In the future, I will use this basic recipe as my base and add additions to make up different versions.

Next I tried the Huckleberry Scones recipe. The lemon zest adds a nice flavor. You can use either huckleberries or blueberries for this one.

I wanted to make a gluten free scone recipe. Often the problem with gluten free bread is that it tends to be dense, so I thought that this would be a perfect fit. I made up a batch of gluten free chocolate chip scones that came out pretty good.

I was really happy to learn that you can freeze the scone dough before it is cooked. I now have a few different batches stored in my freezer ready to bake up. This makes life in the morning a little gentler when I have guests.

I definitely think that scones right out of the oven are one of the best ways to start your day. I am curious to what your breakfast favorites are, I would love to hear about them.

## Basic Scone Recipe

### Ingredients:

2 Cups all purpose flour  
1/3 Cup sugar  
1 Teaspoon baking powder  
1/4 Teaspoon baking soda  
1/2 Teaspoon salt  
8 Tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into small pieces and put into the freezer for

30 minutes  
1/2 Cup dried fruit, I used cherries  
1/2 Cup sour cream  
1 Large egg  
1 Teaspoon sugar

### Directions:

Put your oven rack to the lower middle position and preheat to 400° F. Mix together the flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Using a pastry blender add the butter in and mix together making a coarse corn meal texture.

Add in the dried fruit. In a separate small bowl, whisk together the sour cream and egg. Using a fork add the sour cream mixture to the flour and mix together until the dough starts to stick together. Use your hands to press the dough into a ball. Don't worry if the dough is sticky, it should press together. Put the dough onto a floured surface making an 8-inch circle about 3/4 inch thick. Sprinkle a teaspoon of sugar over top. Cut into 8 triangles with a sharp knife. Place onto a baking sheet lined with parchment paper about 1 inch apart. For softer scones you can leave them together. Bake for 17 minutes until golden brown. Serve warm or at room temperature.

## Huckleberry Scones

### Ingredients:

2 1/4 Cups all purpose flour  
1/3 Cup sugar, plus more for sprinkling  
1 Tablespoon baking powder  
3/4 Teaspoon salt  
1 Stick of cold unsalted butter, cut into pea-sized pieces  
1/4 Cup huckleberries or blueberries, rinsed  
1 Teaspoon grated lemon zest  
1/3 Cup heavy cream  
2 Large eggs, lightly beaten  
1/2 Teaspoon vanilla

### Directions:

Put your oven rack to the lower middle position and preheat the oven to 400° F. Sift together the flour, sugar, baking powder and salt. Using a mixer add the butter pieces to the flour and mix until you get a coarse corn meal texture. In a separate bowl, mix together the lemon zest and huckleberries together then gently add to the flour mixture. Whisk the cream, eggs and vanilla together. Pour the cream mixture into flour and mix just until the dough comes together. Turn onto a floured surface and knead a



few times. The dough may be sticky. I separated the dough into two pieces and made two 6-inch circles. Sprinkle with sugar. Using a sharp knife, cut the dough into rectangle shapes, bake on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper 1 inch apart. For softer scones just score the dough and cook as one disk. Bake for 17 minutes or until the scone is just done.

## Gluten Free Scones

### Ingredients:

1 3/4 Cup gluten-free all purpose baking flour (I used Bob's Red Mill)  
1/3 Cup sugar  
2 Teaspoons baking powder  
1/2 Teaspoon xanthan gum  
1/2 Teaspoon salt  
1 Stick of cold butter, cut into pea sized pieces and put into the freezer for 15 minutes  
3/4 Cup additions (dried fruit, crystallized ginger, chocolate chips, etc.)  
2 Large eggs  
1/3 Cup cold milk  
1 Teaspoon gluten free vanilla extract

### Directions:

Put your oven rack to the lower middle position and preheat the oven to 400° F. Whisk together the flour, sugar, baking powder, salt and xanthan gum. I used a Kitchen Aid mixer to blend the butter in until the flour is the texture of course cornmeal. Gently add the additions, I used chocolate chips. In a separate bowl, whisk together the eggs, milk and vanilla. Add to the flour until well blended. The dough will be sticky. Place on a baking sheet covered with parchment paper. Sprinkle with sugar then cut into triangles and bake 1 inch apart for 15-20 minutes.

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