

# Simplicity itself: Biscuits with just 2 ingredients

By Ligaya Figueras  
The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Biscuits are one of my guilty pleasures. I simply cannot pass up one of these heavenly, flaky, buttery rounds.

Not sure about you, but I've got a biscuit ritual: Snag one hot from the oven. Slice the already bursting seam with a knife. Add a pat of good butter to each half and watch it melt. Do you know how hard it is not to sneak a bite as you watch the butter stain the bread yellow?

I've since gotten ahold of a keeper of a biscuit recipe. It

calls for just two ingredients: White Lily self-rising flour and heavy cream. Perhaps you know of it. It's called Jolene Black's Cream Biscuits. Originally published in the Times-Picayune in April 2005, it is a reader recipe. It has since been reprinted in "Cooking Up a Storm — 10th Anniversary: Recipes Lost and Found from the Times-Picayune of New Orleans."

As the Times-Picayune editors note, success comes from sticking with these two ingredients.

The first time I made these biscuits, I probably

should have recorded my oohs and aahs. I was alone in my kitchen, talking to no one about my wonderment and delight at the divine smell, the sky-high rise of the bread, and the brevity of the baking project — it's not a project; start to finish, making these biscuits is faster than washing dishes by hand. I marveled at the perfection of the liquid-to-dry ratio. And that we don't even need to add salt.

An apple a day might keep the doctor away. A cream biscuit a day surely is a recipe for tasting heaven on earth.

## JOLENE BLACK'S CREAM BISCUITS

Yield: Makes 10-12 biscuits

From "Cooking Up a Storm — 10th Anniversary: Recipes Lost and Found from the Times-Picayune of New Orleans," edited by Judy Walker and Marcelle Bienvenu, published by Chronicle Books.

**2½ cups White Lily self-rising flour**  
**1½ cups heavy cream**

Preheat the oven to 450

degrees. Lightly grease a baking sheet.

Put the flour in a medium mixing bowl and add the cream. Stir until a soft, sticky ball forms. (The dough will seem wet at first.) On a very lightly floured surface, knead lightly with your well-floured hands about 3 times, just until the dough comes together.

Pat the dough to about ½-inch thickness. Cut out biscuits with a 2½-inch round cutter. Bake on the prepared baking sheet for 10 to 12 minutes, until the biscuits are golden brown.

Per serving (based on 10 biscuits): 234 calories (percent of calories from fat, 52), 4 g protein, 24 g carbohydrates, 1 gram fiber, 14 g fat (8 g saturated), 49 mg cholesterol, 410 mg sodium

## SEEDS

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You could also choose citrus seeds (lemon, orange, or tangerine foliage are very attractive dark green and shiny. Plus they have a culinary benefit). This is gardening using things that are destined for the garbage can, but you can make them become houseplants instead.

All the projects of growing from discarded leaves and pits will take extensive amounts of time, but houseplants are usually a commitment anyway, so it is better to know that at the start.

If you want to grow a pineapple top and actually see it produce a baby pineapple it will do that in two years. Just cut the top off the pineapple with at least a

half inch of pineapple flesh under the leaves. Set it on top of the pot of rich soil. Keep the soil moist, not wet. It will grow roots, then eventually start growing leaves for you. Pineapples are from a group of plants called bromeliads.

A seedling avocado may never produce avocados, as the best producers are the grafted trees, but you won't know for many years. They will not grow outdoors in our climate and do not do very well producing fruit in containers. Start them by suspending the bulb/seed in a glass of water with toothpicks. Eventually you will transplant it into a pot.

Lemon trees grown from seed in a container will grow a tree and may produce lemons in 5 to 10 years or maybe less. They will be houseplants

in the winter here for us, as the lowest temperature they tolerate is perhaps 30F, and some will not tolerate a frost at all. Citrus trees do have beautiful shiny dark green leaves. The fragrant leaves lend pleasant flavor to meat dishes such as meatloaf and may be stuck into a meatloaf for purpose of flavoring it, as in the South African meatloaf called bobotie.

## BOBOTIE

**2 lbs ground mutton or beef**  
**2 onions, chop fine**  
**1 thick slice of bread**  
**1 cup of milk**  
**2 eggs**  
**1 Tbsp curry powder**  
**¼ tsp sugar**  
**2 tsp salt**  
**¼ tsp black pepper**  
**1 tsp turmeric**

**2 Tbsp vinegar or lemon juice**  
**6 almonds, cut in quarters**  
**¼ cup seedless raisins**  
**4 green lemon leaves**  
**3 Tbsp chutney**

Fry onions in 1 Tbsp cooking oil. Add meat. Cook until it resembles bread crumbs, but not dry. Soak bread in milk. Squeeze milk out of bread and crumble. Mix 1 egg with ¼ cup milk. Add the rest of ingredients except lemon leaves. Pour mixture into oiled baking dish. Roll lemon leaves up and insert into mixture at various places. Make for 1 hour at 350F degrees. Beat the egg and ¼ cup of milk and pour over the meat. Bake another 15 minutes.

Serve with rice or salads and chutney. Normally it is cut in squares and placed alongside rice. You can adjust the amount of curry and turmeric if you

wish.

Each new year is a new beginning in the garden. What will happen this year, and what will be different in the approach you use and the plants you plant? If you have garden questions or comments, please write: green-gardencolumn@yahoo.com.

## BREAKFAST

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Cooked meats like ham, bacon or sausage are added. Most recipes call for shredded cheese. You can add vegetables such as onions and peppers. And, of course, there's the bread base made from dry (never soft) bread.

Though there are no hard-and-fast rules for these types of casseroles, here are some basic guidelines.

### Bread

Use plain sandwich bread, sweet challah, leftover rolls, croutons or anything you have on hand. Cut bread into cubes or leave in slices. Figure a good 6 cups of bread cubes if you're using a 9-by-13-inch baking dish. Make sure the bread is several days old and dry. If necessary, dry it in a 300-degree oven for 30 minutes.

### Cheese and add-ins

Use shredded cheddar, Monterey Jack, mozzarella, fontina or fontinella. Cheese blends such as Italian or Mexican also work well, or you can use some Parmesan or Gruyere. The amount of cheese you include, according to epicurious.com, is about half the amount of bread you used. If you used 4 cups of bread cubes, use 2 cups of cheese. Add-ins include cooked sausage and bacon, sauteed ham and vegetables like peppers, onions, spinach and kale.

### Eggs and milk

Epicurious.com recommends using equal parts eggs and milk. These, along with the bread, help bind the casserole together. The combination of eggs and milk should equal or come close to the amount of bread you use. If you use 4 cups of cubed bread, use 2 cups of milk and 2 cups of egg, then add in seasonings, herbs or ingredients such as hot

sauce and Dijon mustard.

### Assemble

Butter a baking dish and scatter or layer the bread in the dish. Scatter cooked meat and vegetables over the bread. Sprinkle with all but about ½ cup of the cheese. Pour the milk-egg mixture over the bread. Press down slightly on the mixture so all the bread gets some moisture. It's OK if some bread is exposed at the top. Sprinkle with reserved cheese. Cover with foil and refrigerate at least 8 hours or overnight.

### Bake

Remove casserole from refrigerator, keep covered with foil and bake in a preheated 350- to 375-degree oven about 20 minutes. Then remove the foil and continue baking until casserole is puffed and lightly brown and the center is set and doesn't jiggle. Or bake according to the recipe. Let sit 10 minutes before serving.

## OVERNIGHT CROISSANT BREAKFAST CASSEROLE

Serves: 10 / Prep time: 30 minutes / Total time: 1 hour, 30 minutes, plus overnight chilling time

The original recipe called for country ham, but you can use whatever ham you have. Country ham is dry-cured with salt and seasonings and smoked. It's then aged for months and even a year or more. By comparison, city ham is cured and smoked. You can think of country ham like prosciutto or serrano ham. It's salty and somewhat chewy.

**12 to 15 day-old mini croissants**  
**2 tablespoons olive oil, divided**  
**8 ounces diced ham**  
**1½ pounds sweet onions or other onions, chopped or sliced into**

**1-inch long pieces (about 4 cups)**  
**5 ounces baby spinach, roughly chopped**  
**6 large eggs**  
**2 cups whole milk**  
**1 tablespoon Dijon mustard**  
**1 teaspoon kosher salt**  
**1 teaspoon black pepper**  
**6-8 ounces fontina cheese, shredded (about 2 cups), divided**

Lightly butter a 9-by-13-inch baking dish. Arrange croissants, slightly overlapping, in 2 rows.

In a large skillet, heat 1 tablespoon of the oil over medium heat. Add the ham and saute until it's lightly browned. Using a slotted spoon, transfer ham to a large bowl. (If using country ham, reserving drippings in skillet.) Add the remaining 1 tablespoon oil to skillet; stir in onions. Cook, stirring occasionally, until deeply browned, about 20-30 minutes. Add the spinach; cook, stirring often, until wilted, 1 to 2 minutes. Transfer onion/spinach mixture to bowl with ham; let cool 10 minutes.

In a medium bowl, whisk together eggs, milk, mustard, salt and pepper. Add egg mixture and 1 ½ cups cup of the cheese to bowl with onion mixture and stir to combine. Pour mixture over croissants. Sprinkle the top with the remaining ½ cup cheese. Cover with aluminum foil and chill 8 hours or up to overnight.

When you're ready to serve, preheat oven to 375 degrees. Uncover casserole and place on a large rimmed baking sheet. Bake in preheated oven until golden brown and center is set, about 50 minutes to 1 hour. Cover with foil after 25 minutes, if necessary, to prevent excess browning.

— Adapted from Southern Living Magazine, December 2018 issue.  
Tested by Susan Selasky for the Free Press Test Kitchen.

## DORY

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When I have accomplished that, I may do a better job in directing my legs and feet to follow my plan of action with their previous speed of youth. So far fairly successful in standing up straight and

looking like I have someplace important to go and in a hurry to get there, it hopefully makes me look younger even as the steps slow.

I'm not fooling anyone but myself but even that slows down old Father Time and makes me feel better about myself in facing each day that

way.

Keeping active seems to be the key words when I'd rather just sit and groan my life away.

Let Old Father Time go his way. As long as health permits, it seems to keep me young by staying active with the young folks and involved

in what the future may bring.

Can I keep up? No, of course not, but I can stay in the race and enjoy whatever path I am on whether or not this body responds as well as it ought.

Do I think I'm old at 92? Not by a long shot. So, there, Father Time!

Happy New Year to all!



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