



**ANN BLOOM**  
NUTRITION: IT'S ALL GOOD

## Don't let food poisoning ruin your barbecue

Simple steps can prevent foodborne illnesses

Summer is the season for barbecue. Perhaps the first thing people think of when they think of barbecuing is tri-tip roasts and steaks, then maybe it is hamburgers. Of course, there are hot dogs, chicken and even the occasional pork chop or fish that turns up on the grill. All are delicious served with their respective trimmings — buns, lettuce, tomatoes, pickles, onion and condiments. And let's not leave out the sides, right? Potato and macaroni salads, fruit salads and baked

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**WENDY SCHMIDT**  
BETWEEN THE ROWS

## Surviving the summer doldrums

Stickiness and needing a shower 24/7 seems to be the new normal. It's only slightly better than being asleep under the grass, but you can't call this quality living. Every living thing needs extra hydration and air circulation and peaceful coolness.

Icy drinks and the enticing clink of ice in a tall glass are the next thing to erotic. It's most definitely summer and the season of hot.

Most of our summer gardens are filled with plants that won't survive winter here. They're tropical plants, whose prime growing conditions resemble our summer.

The so-called "cool season vegetables" still don't survive winter here. Many because they're annuals, not perennials, and genetically programmed to survive only one short season. I'm thinking carrots, fava beans, beets and some greens.

Then there are what I think of as deciduous or dormant perennials like artichokes, peonies (only the herbaceous kind), four o'clocks, bulbs, rhubarb, day lilies, and several others that lose all foliage above ground level, then regrow all of their herbaceous stems and leaves every spring.

When planting in the autumn, be mindful of the location of these types of dormant plants, as they may not survive being cut into while they are invisible from above ground.

### Garden Chores

- As garden catalogs arrive, look through them on hot summer afternoons. Ordering what you need promptly assures that you will get the things you want. Some pretty, popular and/or rare items are sold out if you wait too late.

- You can plant cool season vegetables now in place of early produce such as peas and radishes which are finished, to extend your growing season into autumn.

- Try succession planting corn to have several harvests. For instance plant more seeds every two weeks.

- Hoping for a late frost, it's possible to plant fast-maturing vegetables such as cucumbers.

- Deadhead annuals to encourage blooming.

If you have garden questions or comments please write to [Schmidt.wendy1948@gmail.com](mailto:Schmidt.wendy1948@gmail.com). Thanks for reading!



Hillary Levin-St. Louis Post-Dispatch/TNS

# Blissful biscuits

## 6 great recipes

### Homemade Touch of Grace biscuits.

By **DANIEL NEMAN**  
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Talking about biscuits can get downright sensual. Even a little naughty.

They're warm, flaky, steamy, soft, rounded, fragrant, buttery, golden, glistening and immensely satisfying.

Basically, they are everything you could ever want in a breakfast bread, a luncheon carbohydrate or even a dinner roll. They are fun to make, as well, and not too hard.

The best part, though, is smelling them as they cook, with the anticipation of biting into them when they are still warm enough to melt butter and soak up jam or honey.

Recently, I made dozens of biscuits in an assortment of styles, sizes and textures. This experience has given me insight into certain biscuit facts:

- As with pie crusts and bread, the more you work a biscuit dough the tougher the results will be. The dry and wet ingredients in biscuits are always mixed just until they come together to form a ball.
- Biscuits are leavened with baking powder



Hillary Levin-St. Louis Post-Dispatch/TNS

### Homemade Cream biscuits.

or both baking powder and baking soda. They are never made with yeast. But as with all good rules, there is an exception: Angel biscuits are made with baking powder, baking soda and yeast.

- Self-rising flour, which is essential in many Southern biscuit recipes, is flour with baking powder mixed into it, along with a couple of phosphates.

- In the South, biscuits are usually made with White Lily brand flour, which is made from soft winter wheat. Winter wheat has less protein than spring wheat, which means baked goods made from it

They aren't necessary for making biscuits, but they sure help and are fun to use.

- Biscuit cutters should be pressed down through the dough. Twisting them essentially seals the biscuit's edge, which keeps them from rising evenly.

- Biscuits have more calories than you think. I'm sorry, but it can't be helped. That's why they taste so good.

Here are the biscuits I made:

### Buttermilk Biscuits

These rose the highest of all the biscuits I made. Why? Buttermilk is fairly acidic, and when mixed with the small amount of baking soda in the dough it reacts the same way baking soda reacts when mixed with vinegar: It bubbles. The bubbles create tiny air pockets, which make the biscuits rise.

Buttermilk also happens to have just the right taste for biscuits. That slight tang gives them a flavorful warmth and hominess that biscuit-lovers crave.

### Fabulous Biscuits

The name sounds a

little bit too much like shameless self-promotion, right? And in fact, the biscuits themselves are kind of ordinary — if anything as transcendent as a biscuit could ever be considered ordinary. But just before baking, you dip every piece of dough all the way into melted butter. As a result, the cooked biscuits are the most buttery things ever. And that makes them fabulous.

### Touch of Grace Biscuits

• "Touch of heaven" might be a better name. These lightly sweet Southern specialties are impossibly light and delicately flavored. You don't reach for them on the platter as much as grab them as they float up to the ceiling.

### Cream Biscuits

These are classics. If you close your eyes and picture a biscuit, this is probably what you see. The cream makes them rich and a little decadent. They are also the fastest and easiest to make of the bunch, if you want a hit of decadence on the fly.

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## Cool, sweet and healthy: watermelon is the ultimate summer treat

Experts say the fruit is a rich source of vitamins and other nutrients

By **MICHAEL MERSCHEL**  
American Heart Association News

Whether they're serving as snacks at a family reunion or props in a late-night comedy act, watermelons and fun just seem to go together. But how does watermelon hold up health-wise?

Smashingly, you might say.

"I'm definitely impressed by its health benefits," said Tim Allerton, a postdoctoral researcher at Louisiana State University's Pennington Biomedical Research Center in Baton Rouge.

Fruit is always part of a healthy diet. But watermelon's combination of nutrients makes it special, Allerton said.

It's a rich source of minerals such as potassium and magnesium. It's also a good source of vitamins C and A (plus beta carotene, which helps produce vitamin A), and it has fair amounts of vitamins B1, B5 and B6. You get all of that for only 46.5 calories per cup.

Befitting its name, watermelon is about 92% water, which suggests why ancestral watermelons were carried in Africa's Kalahari Desert as long as 5,000 years ago. This is a

treat with a lineage: Modern-looking versions are depicted in ancient Egyptian tombs.

Where watermelon really stands out is in its concentration of certain antioxidants, which regulate cell-damaging free radicals in the body. "Our body has its own antioxidant system, but it helps to get a boost from our diet," Allerton said. "And watermelon is a good source of those antioxidants."

Lycopene, which gives watermelon its reddish color, is one of those antioxidants, along with vitamins C and A. Lycopene also works as an anti-inflammatory and has been linked to lower stroke risk. It is most abundant in cooked tomato products, but watermelon's lycopene levels are about 40% higher than raw tomatoes.

Watermelon also has glutathione, which Allerton called a "versatile, global antioxidant."

And watermelon is high in an amino acid called citrulline, which has been a focus of Allerton's research. "Watermelon is pretty unique because not a lot of foods are high in this," he said.

In a small 2013 study published in the Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry, citrulline in



Mariah Tauger/Los Angeles Times-TNS

### Watermelon is not only sweet, but experts say it's also healthy.

watermelon juice was credited with helping relieve sore muscles in athletes.

Citrulline also is linked to the production of nitric oxide, which is important for the health of blood vessels. Several small studies suggest citrulline in watermelon extract could lower blood pressure, although those effects were seen in people eating the equivalent of more than 3 pounds of watermelon a day for six weeks.

That's a lot of watermelon. But aside from the general idea that indulgence in anything is a bad idea, Allerton said there's no downside to enjoying it.

Even though it has natural sugar and a high gly-

cemic index — a measure of how fast sugar enters the bloodstream — it has a low glycemic load. That means its actual effect on blood sugar is small. And it will fill you up faster than, say, a bowl of cookies.

All nutrition and science aside, aficionados of the fruit just enjoy the taste. Superfan Mark Twain wrote, "It is the chief of this world's luxuries, king by the grace of God over all the fruits of the earth. When one has tasted it, he knows what the angels eat."

Allerton prefers his straight up, but he adds that watermelon juice retains many of the benefits of the whole fruit because so much of the fruit is water already.

That makes watermelon work well in smoothies. Or you can turn it into a fruit salsa.

Experts agree the secret to finding a ripe one is to look for a creamy yellow spot from where the watermelon sat on the ground. If the spot looks more white than yellow, then the melon may not be fully ripe. Weight also is a sign of quality — the heavier the better.

But most experts say you can't learn much about a watermelon's ripeness from thumping it. So you can probably leave that to the comedians.

If you have questions or comments about this story, please email [editor@heart.org](mailto:editor@heart.org).