

By PAM ANDERSON

SIMPLY PERFECT

Scones

holiday breakfast
afternoon tea —
special with these
bakery treats.

NDAY MORNING. You've
atched the newspaper and are
out to head for the bakery.
old it right there. How about
one from your own oven? If
the ingredients, it's possible
batch ready to go into the
at as quickly as most people
the store and back.
y preheating the oven. Mean-
asure the dry ingredients into
add the butter, then your
ried fruit, and finally stir in
ingredients. That's it. The
ready to shape.

are several ways to incorporate butter into
ingredients for scones, biscuits or pie dough —
a pastry cutter, two knives or forks, or the
risk of a food processor. For a small batch of
re found grating frozen butter on a box grater
asier than any of those methods. For a larger
ever, washing the food processor bowl may
able to hand-grating several sticks of butter.
ure the butter is frozen solid. Any softer and
g up the grater, clump together and not mix
the dry ingredients; plus, the scones won't
gh or be as flaky. Store some butter in the
you don't have to wait for it
e next time you want to make
-biscuits or pie dough).
re short on time in the morn-
nd freeze the dry ingredients
incorporated butter) and re-
the egg-sour cream mixture



Dried fruits work best in scones. Raisins and currants are traditional, but here we've used cranberries.

the night before. The next morning, simply mix, form, cut and bake.

To keep the dough as cold as possible during mixing, stir it with a fork until clumps form. At that point, switch to your hand, pressing the clumps together and against the side of the bowl to form a ball. Because there's a minimum of liquid in the recipe (so the scones rise up, not out, as they bake), you may be tempted to add more, but don't. There should be enough liquid to bind the dough. If any crumbs linger, flick a few drops of water onto them and use the dough ball to pick them up.

No need for a rolling pin. Just pat the ball

into a disk, sprinkle it with a little sugar for good looks, and cut it into wedges. You can double the recipe, divide the dough in half to pat out a disk. Otherwise you'll end up with a disk and long, skinny scones.

And make sure to adjust the oven rack to the lower-middle position, not the bottom. The dough has enough sugar that close proximity to the heat could produce dark bottoms. **W**

Contributing Editor PAM ANDERSON is the author of three cookbooks, including *CookSmart* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN, \$28).

Simple Scones

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/3 cup plus 1 tsp. sugar
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1/4 tsp. baking soda
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 8 Tbs. (1 stick) unsalted butter, frozen
- 1/2 cup raisins (or dried currants)
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1 large egg

Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and preheat oven to 400 degrees.

In a medium bowl, mix flour, 1/3 cup sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Grate butter into flour mixture on the large holes of a box grater; use your fingers to work in butter (mixture should resemble coarse meal), then stir in raisins.

In a small bowl, whisk sour cream and egg until smooth.

Using a fork, stir sour cream mixture into flour mixture until large dough clumps form. Use your hands to press the dough against the bottom into a ball. (The dough will be sticky in places, and there may not seem to be enough liquid at first, but as you press, the dough will come together.)

Place on a lightly floured surface and pat into a 7- to 8-inch circle about 3/4-inch thick. Sprinkle with remaining 1 tsp. of sugar. Use a sharp knife to cut into 8 triangles; place on a cookie sheet (preferably lined with parchment paper), about 1 inch apart. Bake until golden, about 15 to 17 minutes. Cool for 5 minutes and serve warm or at room temperature.

Yield: 8 scones.

Per scone: 317 calories, 5g protein, 41g carbohydrates, 15g fat (9g saturated), 1g fiber, 263mg sodium

Cranberry-Orange Scones (shown above)

Follow the recipe for Simple Scones, adding a generous teaspoon of finely grated orange rind (zest) to the dry ingredients and substituting dried cranberries for the raisins.

Lemon-Blueberry Scones

Follow the recipe for Simple Scones, adding a generous teaspoon of finely grated lemon rind (zest) to the dry ingredients and substituting dried blueberries for the raisins.

Cherry-Almond Scones

Follow the recipe for Simple Scones, adding 1/2 tsp. almond extract to the sour cream mixture and substituting dried cherries for the raisins.

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