

how to make scones with plain flour

How to make scones with plain flour is a delightful culinary adventure that can elevate your afternoon tea or breakfast table. Scones are a classic British baked good, known for their flaky texture and buttery flavor. This article will guide you through the process of making scones using plain flour, offering tips and variations to suit your taste.

What You Need to Make Scones with Plain Flour

Before you begin, it's essential to gather all the necessary ingredients and tools. Here's what you will need:

Ingredients

1. Plain Flour: 250 grams (2 cups)
2. Baking Powder: 10 grams (2 teaspoons)
3. Salt: 1/2 teaspoon
4. Butter: 60 grams (1/4 cup), chilled and cubed
5. Sugar: 50 grams (1/4 cup) (optional, for a slightly sweet scone)
6. Milk: 150 ml (2/3 cup), plus extra for brushing
7. Egg: 1 (optional, for an enriched dough)
8. Add-ins: 100 grams of fruit (like raisins, cranberries, or blueberries) or cheese, if desired.

Tools

- Mixing bowl

- Measuring cups and spoons
- A knife or pastry cutter
- Rolling pin
- Baking tray
- Parchment paper
- Cling film (plastic wrap)
- A biscuit cutter or a glass

Step-by-Step Guide to Making Plain Flour Scones

Making scones is a straightforward process, but it requires some attention to detail to ensure they rise beautifully and achieve that signature flaky texture. Follow these steps for the best results.

1. Preheat the Oven

Preheat your oven to 220°C (425°F). This high temperature is crucial for getting a good rise on your scones.

2. Prepare the Baking Tray

Line a baking tray with parchment paper. This will prevent the scones from sticking and make cleanup easier.

3. Mix Dry Ingredients

In a large mixing bowl, combine the plain flour, baking powder, and salt. If you are using sugar, add it

at this stage. Mix the dry ingredients thoroughly to ensure even distribution of the baking powder.

4. Incorporate the Butter

Add the chilled, cubed butter to the dry mixture. Using a knife or pastry cutter, cut the butter into the flour until the mixture resembles coarse breadcrumbs. Be careful not to overwork it; you want to keep some small pieces of butter, which will help create a flaky texture.

5. Add Wet Ingredients

Make a well in the center of the flour mixture. Pour in the milk and, if you're using it, the beaten egg. If you're adding fruit or cheese, fold it in gently at this stage. Use a fork to mix until the dough just comes together. Avoid overmixing, as this can lead to dense scones.

6. Shape the Dough

Turn the dough onto a lightly floured surface. Gently knead it a couple of times to bring it together, but do not over-knead. Pat the dough into a thickness of about 2.5 cm (1 inch) to ensure even cooking.

7. Cut the Scones

Using a biscuit cutter or a glass, cut out your scones from the dough. Press down firmly and twist slightly to help release the scone. Place the cut scones on the prepared baking tray, making sure to leave some space between them for expansion.

8. Brush with Milk

For a golden finish, brush the tops of the scones with a little milk. This step is optional but encourages browning in the oven.

9. Bake the Scones

Place the tray in the preheated oven and bake for 12-15 minutes or until the scones are risen and golden brown. Keep an eye on them to prevent burning.

10. Cool and Serve

Once baked, remove the scones from the oven and transfer them to a wire rack to cool slightly. Scones are best served warm, ideally with clotted cream and jam, or simply butter.

Tips for Perfect Scones

To ensure your scones turn out perfect every time, consider the following tips:

- **Use Cold Ingredients:** Cold butter and milk help to create a flaky texture. You can even chill your flour for added effect.
- **Don't Overwork the Dough:** This is the key to light and fluffy scones. Handle the dough as little as possible.
- **Fresh Baking Powder:** Ensure your baking powder is fresh for maximum rise.

- **Experiment with Flavors:** Try adding citrus zest, herbs, or spices to your dough for unique flavors.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Even seasoned bakers can make mistakes when it comes to scones. Here are some common pitfalls to watch out for:

1. **Using the Wrong Flour:** Plain flour is essential for the right texture. Avoid self-raising flour unless you adjust the baking powder.
2. **Overmixing:** Overworking the dough can lead to tough scones. Mix just until combined.
3. **Not Preheating the Oven:** A preheated oven is crucial for that initial rise. Always preheat your oven before baking.
4. **Cutting with a Sawing Motion:** When cutting scones, press straight down without twisting to maintain their shape.

Variations of Scones with Plain Flour

Scones are incredibly versatile. Here are some delicious variations you can try:

Sweet Scones

- Fruit Scones: Add dried fruit like currants, sultanas, or cranberries.
- Chocolate Chip Scones: Mix in chocolate chips for a sweet treat.

Savoury Scones

- Cheese Scones: Incorporate grated cheese and herbs for a savory option.
- Chive and Onion Scones: Add finely chopped chives or onions for added flavor.

Herbed Scones

- Rosemary or Thyme Scones: Fresh or dried herbs can add a delightful twist to your scone recipe.

Final Thoughts

Making scones with plain flour is a simple yet rewarding process. With just a few ingredients and some careful technique, you can create light, fluffy scones that are perfect for any occasion. Whether you enjoy them with clotted cream and jam or as a savory snack, these delightful baked goods are sure to impress. Happy baking!

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I use plain flour to make scones?

Yes, you can use plain flour to make scones, but the texture may be slightly different compared to using self-raising flour. You may want to add baking powder to help them rise.

How much baking powder should I add to plain flour for scones?

For every 225g (about 2 cups) of plain flour, add 2 to 3 teaspoons of baking powder to achieve a light and fluffy texture.

What is the secret to making scones light and fluffy?

The key is to handle the dough gently and not over-knead it. Also, make sure your ingredients are cold, especially the butter, which helps create a flaky texture.

How long should I bake scones made with plain flour?

Bake scones at 220°C (428°F) for about 12 to 15 minutes, or until they are golden brown and have risen well.

Can I add flavors to my plain flour scones?

Absolutely! You can add ingredients like dried fruits, chocolate chips, or spices such as cinnamon to enhance the flavor of your scones.

What temperature should I use when baking scones with plain flour?

Preheat your oven to 220°C (428°F) for the best results when baking scones with plain flour.

How do I know when my scones are done baking?

Scones are done when they are golden brown on top and sound hollow when tapped on the bottom. You can also insert a toothpick; it should come out clean.

Can I freeze scones made with plain flour?

Yes, you can freeze scones either before baking or after. If freezing unbaked scones, place them on a tray to freeze, then transfer them to a freezer bag. Bake from frozen, adding a few extra minutes to the baking time.

What are some common mistakes to avoid when making scones?

Common mistakes include over-kneading the dough, using warm ingredients, and not preheating the oven. These can lead to tough or flat scones.

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