



## Cooking Class: Flaky & Fluffy Gluten Free Biscuits

I don't think that any of my recipes have pleased John more than the series of gluten free biscuit recipes that I've developed over the years. I never would have imagined that gluten free biscuits could be so good, nor that there could be so much technique involved in cooking a little squat piece of bread.

### LEARN:

It's difficult to create a good gluten free bread recipe without understanding how the recipe works in its original wheat flour based form. So, let's start with some background on biscuits.

According to Harold McGhee in "On Food and Cooking: The Science and Lore of the Kitchen," American styled biscuits are made from a moist dough of milk or buttermilk, flour, pieces of solid fat, and baking soda. There are traditionally two styles of biscuits – flaky and tender – which refer to the texture of the interior of the biscuits. Flaky biscuits have layers that you can peel apart (Pillsbury's Flaky Layer biscuits are an extreme example), while tender biscuits have to be cut apart. In this class, We'll be learning to make flaky biscuits and two different types of tender biscuits.

Now, let's discuss some of the ingredients that we'll be working with and potential substitutions for those of you who have additional food restrictions.

*Flour:* In all three of the recipes, I use, a mixture of brown rice flour (Bob's Red Mill), corn starch (Argo or Bob's Red Mill), and soy flour (Arrowhead Mill). If you can not use corn starch, then substitute tapioca flour (Ener-G) or potato starch (Ener-G). If you cannot use sorghum flour, or have trouble finding a gluten free brand, substitute gluten free sorghum flour or garfava flour. (The brands in parenthesis are the brands that I use, but they usually not the only gluten free brand)

Some of you may are probably wondering if you can use flours with a lower glycemic index. I know there is a lot of corn starch in this recipe, and that bothers me too. When I started making biscuits I used my all-purpose flour recipe which uses more whole grain flours, but the biscuits were not nearly as good. I'd rather have amazing biscuits every now and then, than have tough biscuits every day

*Milk or Buttermilk:* My family does not eat a lot of dairy, so I always use soy milk plus cider vinegar to create a non-dairy buttermilk. Of course, you can substitute the soy milk and cider vinegar with buttermilk, or use a milk alternative that fits with your dietary needs. Sometimes I replace half of the milk in the recipe with water to reduce the calories.

*Solid Fat:* The fat in biscuits is the component that makes them tender or flaky. Small pieces of fat that are covered with flour result in tender biscuits; large pieces of fat that are covered with flour and then rolled out into long thin pieces create the layers in flaky biscuits.

The fat in biscuits can be butter, a non-dairy butter alternative, or shortening. If you are using a butter alternative, which I do sometimes, be sure to use one that is hard at room temperature. If you are unable to use dairy and soy products, try a palm oil shortening or chilled coconut oil (be sure to check labels to ensure that it is gluten free!)

The process of incorporating the fat into the biscuit is called “cutting in”. There are a number of ways to do this. If you need small pieces of fat (like you do for tender biscuits) then you can grate frozen butter and mix it in with the flour. Or you can use a pastry cutter, two knives, or your fingers to cut in the flour in a more traditional manner. Regardless of which method you use, the goal is to get solid chunks of fat covered with flour and distributed throughout the dough. In the videos, I’ll demonstrate several of these methods.

*Baking Powder and Baking Soda:* Both of these ingredients are leavening agents and using both gives a lot of rise to the biscuits. Since we are using baking soda, we have to have an acidic ingredient in the recipe to activate the baking soda. Buttermilk (or the cider vinegar if you are going the non-dairy route) fulfills this role, so be sure not to leave it out.

*Egg:* If you are unable to use egg, I have substituted a flax egg (1 Tbsp. ground flax seed + 3 Tbsp. warm water) on occasions when I started making biscuits and then realized that I was out of eggs. The biscuits will have brown flecks in them, but the taste is not affected. Be sure to mix the ground flax seed and water together several minutes before they are needed in the recipe, so that the mixture has time to thicken.

### **What Makes the Biscuits Different?**

As you’ll notice when you start baking the biscuits, the three recipes are very similar. The only differences are the amount of liquids, the type of fat, and the techniques used to cut in the fat and form the biscuit. Drop biscuits are a kind of tender biscuits. To make these biscuits the fat is cut-in until it is the size of small peas. The liquid content is higher, forming a biscuit dough that would be too soft to roll out and handle by hand. The biscuits are dropped onto the cooking sheet using two spoons.

Tender biscuits can also be rolled out and cut into circle or square shapes. This method of forming the biscuit is preferable when you want to use the biscuit for a breakfast sandwich. Since the dough needs to

be rolled out, the water is reduced to make a drier dough. The dough is still wet enough that you wouldn't want to try to pick it up off of your rolling board once you've rolled it out (because it would fall apart!) Flaky biscuits are made from a drier dough as well, but the fat is cut-in only until the pieces of fat are the size of pecan-halves. When the biscuit dough is rolled out the fat is also rolled out into long pieces. To get the layered effect, the rolled out dough is folded into thirds (like a business letter) several times. The folding process stacks the layers of fat on top of each other so that the dough is separated into layers when it cooks. In the video for flaky biscuits I do the tri-fold twice, for a total of 6 folds. However, for even flakier biscuits roll the dough out a little bit after the second tri-fold and then do a third tri-fold.

Since you have to handle the dough so much for flaky biscuits, I like to use shortening as my fat rather than butter. Shortening is much more stable at room temperature and it also gives a nice little crunch to the outside of the biscuit.

**PLAN:**

Now that you've read this, watch the videos and read the recipes. Make sure that you have everything that you need to make your biscuits. This is the PLAN step that I talk about in the book.

**ACT:**

After that, it's time to ACT. Bake each of the three types of biscuits. Be sure to take notes while you bake, especially if you do any ingredient substitutions. This will give you a record of what you've done, so that you can make adjustments next time if you want.

**TALK:**

Once you've done your baking, it's time to analyze your efforts and get feedback in the TALK step. Get you family's feedback on the biscuits. Is there anything that you would like to change about the recipe? Add these notes to your baking notes. If you have questions, post them on any of the blog posts in this course.

## 8 Different Ways to Serve Gluten Free Biscuits

Now that you've learned the basics of how to bake delicious gluten free biscuits, here are some additional recipes that will complement the biscuits or take them to a whole new level.

### **Biscuit Gravies:**

Biscuits are delicious for breakfast anytime, but if you're making them for a special occasion you may want to serve a gravy as well. [Sawmill gravy](#) is a white gravy made from butter, gluten free flour, and cream. It's not something that you should eat every day, but I love it as a special treat. It's especially good with sausage patties.

[Redeye gravy](#) is another favorite if you're planning on serving country ham for breakfast. I love this on my biscuit and on top of my grits!

You can also serve biscuits for supper and top them with a tomato gravy. Here's a [traditional recipe](#) (just use GF flour w/o xanthan gum) and a [gluten free, dairy free version](#).

### **Little Bites:**

Small meat sandwiches make a frequent appearance at dinner buffets and receptions. They would also make a great addition to your next party when you serve them on flaky biscuits. Try ham biscuits with [Jezebel sauce](#) or pork loin or roast beef with [mustard horseradish sauce](#).

Do you ever wish for a scone to go with your afternoon coffee or tea? You can have it now, because a scone is just a sweetened tender biscuit. Here is my recipe for [fresh blueberry scones](#). My basic scone recipe is included in [our e-book](#) along with 12 different flavoring options.

### **Supper:**

Chicken Pot Pie with a Biscuit Crust is easy. Just make a half recipe of the tender biscuits recipe and add an extra 3/4 c. of milk to the dough. This will thin the dough out and you can simply spoon it on top of the pot pie filling. Bake for 45 minutes at 350 degrees and supper will be ready.

### **Dessert:**

Biscuits or scones are delicious when topped with fresh strawberries and whipped cream to make Strawberry Shortcake. Use my biscuit or scone recipe, and then top it off with the strawberries and cream from [this recipe](#).

You can also make an easy fruit cobbler using the trick I showed you for Chicken Pot Pie. Use your favorite cobbler recipe, but for the top crust use a half recipe of tender biscuits plus 3/4 c. milk. This will be enough topping for a 9 x 13 dish.

# Tender Gluten Free Biscuits

by Gluten Free Cooking School

Here's the recipe for my tender gluten free biscuits. It's the first of three recipes that we'll be posting for gluten free biscuits.

(Note: I updated this recipe on 4/1/12 to add the weight measurements and to correct the leavening amounts. I also changed soymilk to milk – you can use any plain non-dairy (gluten free) milk that you like.)

## Tender Gluten Free Biscuits

(Yield: 16 large biscuits)

6.5 oz (1 1/2 c.) brown rice flour  
10 oz. (2 c.) corn starch  
2.5 oz. (1/2 c.) soy flour or sorghum flour  
4 tsp. baking powder  
2 tsp. salt  
1/2 tsp. baking soda  
2 tsp. xanthan gum  
4 oz. (8 Tbsp.) butter or shortening(chilled in the freezer)  
16 oz. milk, (non-dairy is fine)  
1 Tbsp. cider vinegar  
1 large egg, beaten

1. Preheat your oven to 350 degrees.
2. In a large mixing bowl thoroughly combine the flours, baking powder, salt, baking soda, and xanthan gum.
3. Grate the butter into the flour using the small holed side of a box grater. Mix the butter into the flour so that there are no large balls of grated butter.
4. Add the milk, water, vinegar and beaten egg to the flour and stir until the dry and liquid ingredients are combined.
5. Put the dough onto a lightly floured surface and sprinkle with flour. Roll the dough out into a circle that is approximately 3/4" thick. Use a biscuit cutter to cut out the biscuits, being careful not to twist the cutter when you pull it out of the dough.
6. Roll the scraps from the first cutting back into a ball and roll out into a second round 3/4" thick and cut additional biscuits.
7. Bake biscuits at 350 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes. When they are done the tops will be slightly golden and the top of the biscuits will be firm to the touch.

# Flaky Gluten Free Biscuits

by Gluten Free Cooking School

Here is my recipe for flaky gluten free biscuits that are just like the pop-out-of-a-can biscuits we all used to eat.

(Note: I updated this recipe on 4/1/12 to add the weight measurements and to correct the leavening amounts. I also changed soymilk to milk – you can use any plain non-dairy (gluten free) milk that you like.)

## Flaky Gluten Free Biscuits

(Yield: 16 large biscuits)

6.5 oz. (1 1/2 c.) brown rice flour  
10 oz. (2 c.) corn starch  
2.5 oz. (1/2 c.) soy flour or sorghum flour  
4 tsp. baking powder  
2 tsp. salt  
1/2 tsp. baking soda  
2 tsp. xanthan gum  
1 c. shortening  
16 oz. milk (non-dairy is fine)  
2 Tbsp. cider vinegar  
1 large egg, beaten

1. Preheat your oven to 350 degrees.
2. In a large mixing bowl thoroughly combine the flours, baking powder, salt, baking soda, and xanthan gum.
3. Cut the shortening into the flour until is in chunks the size of pecan halves.
4. Add the soy milk, water, vinegar and beaten egg to the flour and stir until the dry and liquid ingredients are combined.
5. Put the dough onto a lightly floured surface and sprinkle with flour. Roll the dough out into rectangle and fold into thirds like a letter and then fold into halves in the opposite direction. Roll the dough out into a rectangle again and repeat the folding technique.
6. Roll the dough out a third time, this time until is is 3/4" thick. Use a biscuit cutter to cut out the biscuits, being careful not to twist the cutter when you pull it out of the dough.
7. Roll the scraps from the first cutting back into a ball and roll out into a second round 3/4" thick and cut additional biscuits.
8. Bake biscuits at 350 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes. When they are done the tops will be slightly golden and the top of the biscuits will be firm to the touch.

# Gluten Free Drop Biscuits

by Gluten Free Cooking School

Here is the third and last recipe in our gluten free biscuits lesson. Drop biscuits are great because they're usually a bit quicker to make than biscuits that you cut out. I also personally think they go great with soups, stews and any other hearty meal.

(Note: I updated this recipe on 4/1/12 to add the weight measurements and to correct the leavening amounts. I also changed soymilk to milk – you can use any plain non-dairy (gluten free) milk that you like.)

## Light and Fluffy Gluten Free Biscuits

(Yield: 16 large biscuits)

6.5 oz. (1 1/2 c.) brown rice flour

10 oz. (2 c.) corn starch

2.5 oz. (1/2 c.) soy flour or sorghum flour

4 tsp. baking powder

2 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. baking soda

2 tsp. xanthan gum

4 oz. butter (chilled in the freezer)

10 oz. (1 1/4 c.) milk (non-dairy is fine)

10 oz. (1 1/4 c.) water

1 Tbsp. cider vinegar

1 large egg, beaten (or the equivalent amount of your favorite egg replacement)

1. Preheat your oven to 350 degrees.
2. In a large mixing bowl thoroughly combine the flours, baking powder, salt, baking soda, and xanthan gum.
3. Grate the butter into the flour using the small holed side of a box grater. Mix the butter into the flour so that there are no large balls of grated butter.
4. Add the soy milk, water, vinegar and beaten egg to the flour and stir until the dry and liquid ingredients are combined.
5. Using a large spoon, drop the dough onto a greased pan to make 16 biscuits. Cook at 350 degrees for 15 minutes or until golden brown.