

SCONES

Paul Hollywood's Scones

This simple recipe will give you soft and fluffy scones - perfect with jam and plenty of clotted cream.



Easy

SCONES



PREPARATION



Preparation time:

about 30 minutes

Cooking time: 10–15 minutes

Makes: about 8 large scones

INGREDIENTS

- 500g/1lb 1oz strong bread flour, plus a little extra for rolling out
- 80g/3oz softened butter, plus a little extra to grease the baking tray
- 80g/3oz caster sugar
- 2 eggs
- 25g/5 level tsp baking powder
- 250ml/8½ fl oz milk
- 1 free-range egg, beaten with a little salt (for glazing)
- Butter
- Good-quality strawberry or raspberry jam
- Clotted cream

EQUIPMENT

- Scales
- Flat baking tray
- Wooden spoon
- Baking parchment or silicone paper (not greaseproof)
- Round pastry cutter (about 7.5cm/3in wide)
- Rolling pin
- Pastry brush
- Cooling rack

METHOD

1. Weigh out the ingredients.
2. Preheat the oven to 220°C (200°C fan assisted)/425F/Gas 7.
3. Lightly butter and line a baking tray with baking parchment or silicone paper.
4. Put 450g/15½oz of the flour into a large bowl and add the butter. Rub the flour and butter together with your fingers to create a crumble/breadcrumb-like mixture.
5. Add the sugar, eggs and baking powder and use a wooden spoon to turn the mixture gently. Make sure you mix all the way down to the bottom and incorporate all of the ingredients.
6. Now add half of the milk and keep turning the mixture gently with the spoon to combine. Then add the remaining milk a little at a time and bring everything together into a very soft, wet dough. You may not need to add all of the milk.
7. Put most of the remaining flour onto a clean work surface. Tip the soft dough onto the flour and sprinkle the rest of the flour on top. The mixture will be wet and sticky.
8. Lightly chaff the mixture – use your hands to fold the dough in half, and then turn the dough a quarter turn and repeat. By folding and turning the mixture in this way, you incorporate the last of the flour and add air. Do this a few times until you've formed a smooth dough. If the mixture is too sticky use some extra flour to coat your hands or the mixture to make it more manageable. Be careful not to overwork your dough.

TOP TIP

Dip the edge of the pastry cutter in flour to make it easier to cut out the scones without them sticking. Don't twist the cutter - this makes the scones rise unevenly - just press firmly, then lift up and push the dough out.



9. Next roll the dough out - sprinkle flour onto the work surface and the top of the dough. Use the rolling pin to roll up from the middle and then down from the middle. Turn the dough a quarter turn and repeat until it's about 2.5cm/1in thick. Relax the dough slightly by lifting the edges and allowing the dough to spring back.
10. Using a pastry cutter, stamp out rounds and place them onto the baking tray. Once you've cut 4 or 5 rounds you can re-work and re-roll the dough to make it easier to cut out the remaining rounds. Any left-over dough can be worked and rolled again, but the resulting scones won't be as fluffy.
11. Place the scones on the baking tray and leave them to rest for a few minutes to let the baking powder work. Then use a pastry brush (or your finger if you don't have a brush) to glaze them with the beaten egg and salt mixture. Be careful to keep the glaze on the top of the scones. If it runs down the sides it will stop them rising evenly.
12. Bake in the middle of the oven for 15 minutes, or until the scones are risen and golden.
13. Leave the scones to cool, then split in half and add butter, jam and clotted cream to serve.



EQUIPMENT AND INGREDIENTS



FLOUR

It's important to choose the right flour for your recipe. Bread needs a strong flour with a high gluten content. Gluten is the protein that is stretched during kneading to give a soft, elastic dough and a well-risen loaf with a soft texture.

A softer flour, lower in gluten and finely milled, is used to make cakes and pastry light and fluffy. Using a flour with a high gluten content makes cakes tough or rubbery. Softer flours are usually sold as plain flour or self-raising flour. Cake recipes that use plain flour will usually ask for the addition of baking powder or bicarbonate of soda. Self-raising flour is plain flour ready-mixed with raising agents.

Wholemeal flour can be substituted for white flour, but will give a heavier result - try experimenting with half and half first.



YEAST

Yeast is a single-cell fungus that is used to make bread rise. When yeast is given air and food (sugar and flour) in a warm environment (a standard kitchen as opposed to the fridge), the yeast will grow quickly and produce lots of carbon dioxide. It's this carbon dioxide that causes bread to rise. Yeast dies at 60°C, so once it's done its job and the bread has risen, it's killed off in the oven.

Yeast flourishes at warm temperatures, around 35°C, so warm water should be used in dough to activate the yeast. If it's too hot it will kill the yeast.

Yeast is also killed by direct contact with salt, which is why bread recipes normally say to mix the salt into the flour first to 'dilute' it, or to add the salt and yeast to opposite sides of the bowl.

Yeast can be bought fresh or dried. Fresh yeast may be available in bakeries or at the bread counter in supermarkets. Dried yeast is sold as 'dried active yeast', which needs to be reactivated in warm water before using, or as 'quick' or 'instant' yeast, which can be added directly to flour in its dry form.