

Bake NOT Burn: Baking Biscuits
2022 International Airstream Rally, Fryeburg ME
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Welcome to our biscuit baking class! Our main goal is for each participant to leave with an increase skill level for managing temperature control in a camp Dutch oven with charcoal. Let's take a few minutes to go over some techniques, tips, tools, and equipment necessary for baking beautiful biscuits in our outdoor kitchens.

Temperature Control

This is the most challenging aspect of baking perfect biscuits in a camp Dutch oven. Biscuits can go from perfect-to-burned in the blink of an eye. And, they can be a sticky mess if they are under baked. Pay close attention to the biscuits during the final few minutes of the baking time. Your nose is your best guide to know when to pull biscuits off of the charcoal. You will smell the lovely aroma of golden biscuits, created by the Maillard reaction, as the amino acids and reducing sugars in the biscuits heat up in the oven. If you smell the acrid bitter aroma of burning, pull the lid off and remove the oven from the charcoal immediately. It may be too late, but you'll prevent the biscuits from ruin.

You can bake these recipes in larger or smaller ovens but you will need to adjust the number of coals to achieve the stated temperature of the oven. Avoid baking biscuits in a deep camp Dutch oven. Temperature control for beautifully golden biscuits is trickier since there is more space in the oven, creating more variability in the temperature and more difficulty achieving a gold- en brown biscuit.

Use fresh, hot coals that have "angel" wings or white tips on the corners of the charcoal. Using charcoal that has burned up will decrease the temperature and may result in longer cooking time or under-baked biscuits.

Placement of hot charcoal is very important. The bottom ring of charcoal needs to be placed under the outer edge of the oven. The ring of charcoal on the lid should be around the outer edges as well. Do NOT cluster the charcoal together underneath the oven.

If you are baking in cold, windy, or rainy conditions, your cook time may take longer. We highly recommend using a wind screen to keep the heat close to the camp Dutch oven.

Rotate lid and oven half way through bake time to avoid hot spots. Carefully turn the lid and oven in opposite directions **without lifting the lid**.

Do not lift the lid to check the biscuits! Once you put the camp Dutch oven on the charcoal, resist the temptation to check on them. Even a quick peek can instantly drop the temperature by 50 or degrees.

Fire safety is essential. Biscuits bake at very high temperatures - between 425 to 500 degrees Fahrenheit. Take care to set up your cooking area to have all of the tools needed for fire safety including heat-resistant gloves, tongs, lid stand, chimney, and a bucket for hot, used charcoal. A big bucket of water is good to have in case of fire.

Baking Tips

I like my biscuits with crispy edges, so I space my biscuits out and give them room - about 1/4 to 1/2 of an inch. If you like the sides of your biscuits soft, then place each biscuit up against its neighbor.

In these recipes we've given you a suggested height for your biscuits. You can make them taller or shorter by adjusting the depth when you roll out the dough before you cut the biscuits.

If you have a scale, use it to measure the flour in grams or ounces. If you don't have a scale, take a moment to aerate the flour by running a fork or whisk through the flour, lifting and turning to unpack the compressed flour. If you don't weigh or aerate the flour, you will have too much flour and your biscuits will be dry, dense, and useful for hockey, not breakfast. Geek out and learn more about how to measure flour from King Arthur Flour. <https://www.kingarthurbaking.com/videos/baking-skills/how-to-measure-flour>

Keep dairy products, especially butter or lard, as **cold** as possible unless the recipe calls for room temperature.

Do not over work the dough. The more the dough is handled, stirred, or mixed, the tougher the biscuit will be. Follow directions for mixing dough to avoid over mixing.

Biscuit dough has the right amount of liquid when it pulls away from the sides of the bowl, is wet but not runny and sticky, and looks messy. You may need to add more liquid or flour depending on the humidity and other conditions that effect the dough.

Liberally dust hands, rolling pin, and work space with flour when shaping dough.

I always wear an apron. There isn't any way to make flaky biscuits without making a mess. Check expiration dates. Make sure baking powder and self-rising flour is fresh and has not expired.

BONUS BAKING TIP: After you've cut the dough, place biscuits in a plastic zip top bag and freeze. Bake frozen biscuits (don't thaw) for one or two minutes longer than recipe calls for.

Goat Cheese and Herb Biscuits

<http://www.texasironchef.com/?recipe=goat-cheese-and-herb-biscuits>

Makes 12-14 Biscuits

Ingredients

2 cups (240 grams) All-Purpose flour with 1/8th of a cup for shaping biscuits
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon finely ground black pepper
4 teaspoons baking powder 2 tablespoons sugar
3 tablespoons chives, chopped and freeze dried
1 tablespoon thyme, fresh and finely chopped
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon onion powder
8 tablespoons unsalted butter, ice cold
6 ounces goat cheese crumbled and cold
1 cup heavy cream, ice cold
1 tablespoon melted butter or heavy cream Kosher salt optional but highly recommended

Directions

1. Prepare a 12-inch camp Dutch oven by spraying it with oil or rubbing a pat of butter all over the bottom of the oven.
2. In a large bowl, add flour salt, pepper, baking powder, sugar, chives, thyme, garlic powder, and onion powder. Whisk until all ingredients are equally distributed throughout the flour.
3. Unwrap one end of the butter, leaving the other half wrapped. Make a mark in the butter to measure out 3 tablespoons. Using the largest holes on a box grater, quickly grate the butter into the flour mixture. Carefully toss the butter into the flour with a fork, separating clumps to make sure the butter is evenly distributed throughout the flour mixture.

4. Add crumbled goat cheese, tossing with a fork and breaking up clumps into pea size pieces.
5. Make a well in the center of the bowl and add heavy cream. Toss the flour mixture over the cream using a spatula or dough scraper. Continue to toss the mixture together (do NOT stir) until dry ingredients are incorporated with cream. The goal is to work the dough as little as possible. The dough is ready the it has the right amount of cream when it pulls away from the sides of the bowl, is wet but not runny and is a shaggy mess. Add more cream only if doughs very dry.
6. Sprinkle a lot of flour onto work area. Dump dough out and use bowl scraper to remove any dough that is clinging to the bowl.
7. Place prepared camp Dutch oven, rolling pin, bench scraper, and biscuit cutter within reach.
8. Generously dust hands with flour, then gently push the dough into a square that is approximately 8-9 inches on each side. The dough will be very sticky but don't worry. Add more flour to your hands as needed but as sparingly as possible. Use a bench scrapper as needed.
9. Generously flour the rolling pin, Gently roll the square of dough out until it is doubled, about 16 inches on each side. Add flour as needed to the dough and to the rolling pin to keep the dough from sticking to the rolling pin. Slide the bench scraper underneath the dough to make sure it isn't sticking. This will be messy but that's OK.
10. Using the bench scrapper, fold one third of the dough over and repeat for the other side in the fashion of folding a business envelope. Again, the dough will be a shaggy mess.
11. Fold the dough again into thirds. Gently roll out until dough is about 1/2 inch thick. Repeat folding and rolling two more times. These folds create the flaky layers in the biscuit.
12. Fold business letter one more time, then roll out to 3/4 inch thick.
13. To cut the biscuit, flour a 2-inch biscuit cutter. Press the cutter into the dough without twisting it, then pick up the biscuit. If it sticks, loosen with bench scraper. Cut the biscuits as close together as possible. When all the dough has been cut, shape the remaining dough into a 3/4 inch layer with as little handling as possible. Cut remaining biscuits.
14. Place biscuits into prepared 12-inch camp Dutch oven. Space each biscuit about 1/2 inch apart for crispy biscuits. For soft sided biscuits, put biscuits so they are crowded and touching one another.
15. Bake at 425 degrees Fahrenheit with 23 hot charcoals around the lid of the oven and 10 in a circle be- neath the oven. Wrap with flashing. Bake for 18-20 minus, taking care to monitor the oven during the final two minutes. When you smell the aroma of baked biscuits, they are done.
16. Using a pastry brush, paint melted butter or heavy cream on top of each biscuit then sprinkle with Kosher salt.