



## History and Traditions

**Activity:** Baking biscuits

**Lesson:** History of biscuits

### Biscuit fun facts:

1. In the United States, what we know as biscuits are more like cookies in the United Kingdom.
2. National Biscuit Day is May 29<sup>th</sup> in the United States. Buttermilk biscuits have their own holiday, observed on May 14<sup>th</sup>.
3. Many early physicians believed that most medicinal problems were associated with digestion. Hence, for both sustenance and avoidance of illness, a daily consumption of a biscuit was considered good for health.<sup>1</sup>

### History of biscuits:

The word biscuit comes from the Latin words *bis* and *cotus*, meaning twice baked. The idea of making biscuits dates back to Roman times.<sup>2</sup> The biscuit emerged as a well known food in the early 19th century, before the American Civil War.<sup>3</sup> Before the popularity of baking powder spread nation wide, people used potash and soured milk, or clabbered milk to leaven their biscuits. After baking powder hit the markets in the 1870s, biscuits were much easier to make at home and became more popular.

On November 30, 1875, Alexander P. Ashbourne invented a biscuit cutter. A cook could push down on the plate to cut the dough into shapes, making biscuits more consistent shapes for better results.<sup>4</sup>

In 1931, the first biscuit mix boxes were introduced. In 1951, the first refrigerated biscuits were sold.

<sup>1</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biscuit>

<sup>2</sup> <http://localhistories.org/biscuits.html>

<sup>3</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/biscuit\\_\(bread\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/biscuit_(bread))

<sup>4</sup> <http://southernfoodways.org/biscuits>

## Buttery Breakfast Biscuits

### Ingredients:

- 2 c. all-purpose flour
- 1Tbsp. sugar
- 1 Tbsp. Clabber Girl Baking Powder
- 1/2 tsp. cream of tartar
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/2 c. margarine or butter
- 3/4 c. heavy whipping cream or half-and-half

### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 450 degrees F.
2. In a large mixing bowl, stir together flour, sugar, baking powder, cream of tartar, and salt.
3. Using a pastry blender, cut in margarine until mixture resembles coarse crumbs.
4. Make a well in center; add cream all at once. Using a fork or wooden spoon, stir just till moistened.
5. On a lightly floured surface, knead dough for 10 to 12 strokes or until nearly smooth.
6. Pat or lightly roll dough to 1/2-inch thickness.
7. Cut dough with a 2 1/2-inch biscuit cutter, dipping the cutter into flour between cuts.
8. Place biscuits on an ungreased baking sheet.
9. Bake in a 450 degree F. oven for 10 to 12 minutes or till golden brown. Serve warm.

Makes 10 - 12 biscuits

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