

Quick Breads

OBJECTIVES

- Discover . . .**
- how quick breads fit into a healthful eating plan.
 - how to select and store baking ingredients and convenience forms.
 - how to prepare quick breads.

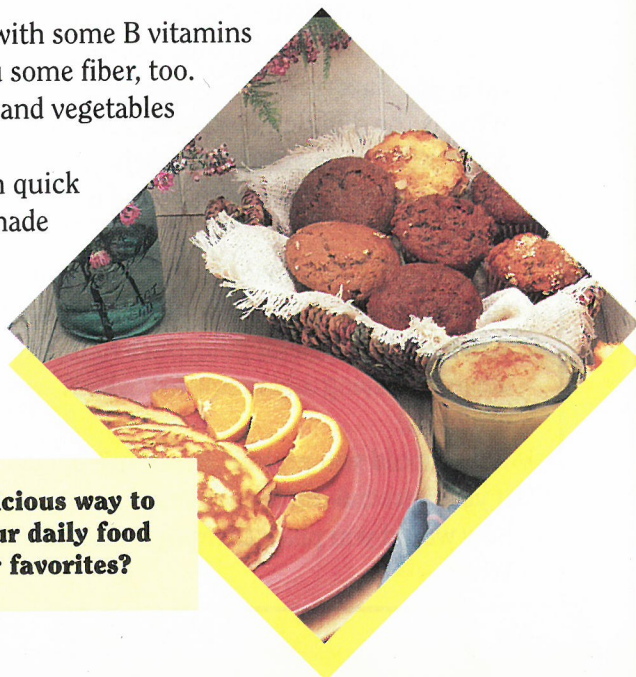
Quick breads are “quick” because they do not take as long to prepare as breads made with yeast. (For more about yeast breads, see page 281.) Quick breads include pancakes, waffles, muffins, biscuits, and some loaf breads and coffee cakes. They usually use baking powder as a leavening. As soon as they are mixed, they are put in the oven to bake.

Nutrition Notes

Quick breads provide complex carbohydrates along with some B vitamins and iron. If made with whole grain flour, they give you some fiber, too. Using milk in quick breads adds calcium. Nuts, fruits, and vegetables in the recipe add flavor and nutrients.

The amount of sugar, fat, cholesterol, and calories in quick breads depends on the recipe. For example, a muffin made with skim milk and vegetable oil will be lower in saturated fat and cholesterol than one made with whole milk and butter. A nutritious, low-fat quick bread makes a tasty snack or dessert. It can be a more healthful choice than cake, cookies, or pie.

Eating quick breads is a delicious way to add breads and grains to your daily food plan. What are some of your favorites?



Consumer Power

Quick breads can be made from scratch or with convenience products. In either case, use your consumer skills to select the products you want and store them properly.

Buying and Storing Baking Ingredients

As you learned in Chapter 38, each ingredient in baked products has a specific job to do. Here is more information about buying and storing some of those ingredients.

Flour

Many types of flour are available, such as:

- ◆ All-purpose flour—enriched white flour made from wheat.
- ◆ Whole wheat flour—made from the entire wheat kernel.
- ◆ Self-rising flour—has leavening and salt added.

Use the type of flour called for in the recipe. If the recipe does not specify a type, use all-purpose flour.

Store flour in a cool, dry place. After opening the bag, put the flour in a tightly covered container.



Check labels carefully to be sure you use the right type of flour.

Sweeteners

Here are some of the most common sweeteners used in baking. All should be stored in tightly closed containers in a cool, dry place.

- ◆ Granulated sugar is white table sugar.
- ◆ Brown sugar is granulated sugar with molasses added. Dark brown sugar has a stronger flavor than light brown.
- ◆ Powdered, or confectioner's, sugar has a fine texture.
- ◆ Honey is a liquid sweetener with a distinct flavor. Use it only when the recipe calls for it.

You can also buy artificial sweeteners. Use these only in recipes that have been specifically developed for them.



Sweeteners provide flavor and make baked products brown.

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Leavening Agents

Most quick bread recipes call for either baking powder or baking soda. Check packages of baking powder for a "use by" date. After that date, the products will not give good results.

Store baking soda and baking powder in a cool, dry place. Baking powder must always be kept dry, so cover it tightly.



Fats and Oils

The fats and oils most commonly used in baking are butter, margarine, vegetable oil, lard, and shortening. Each one gives a slightly different flavor and texture. Lard is highest in saturated fat, while vegetable oil is lowest.

Solid fats and liquid fats cannot be used in place of one another in baking. The results will not be the same.

Butter, margarine, and lard should be stored in the refrigerator. Vegetable oil and shortening should be stored in a cool, dry place. If oil is refrigerated, it thickens and becomes cloudy.



Why can't all of these products be substituted for one another in baking?

Convenience Forms

If you don't have time to prepare quick breads from scratch, you can use convenience forms. For example, refrigerated biscuits are ready to bake. With boxed mixes, you mix in the liquid and bake according to package directions.

You can also buy ready-made quick breads, fresh or frozen. However, preparing your own can be creative and satisfying. What are some other reasons for choosing to bake your own quick breads?



Convenience quick bread products are available for the busy consumer.

Storing Quick Breads

Wrap prepared quick breads tightly and store at room temperature. Use within a few days. For longer storage, freeze them.

Food Skills

Quick breads differ in the way they are mixed. The two most common mixing methods are called the muffin method and the biscuit method.

Muffin Method

The muffin method of mixing is used for muffins, pancakes, waffles, cornbread, and loaves like banana bread. First the dry ingredients are mixed together in a bowl. Then the liquid ingredients are combined and added to the dry. The recipe for Streusel Top Muffins on page 283 gives specific directions.

The batter is mixed only long enough to moisten the dry ingredients. The batter should be lumpy, not smooth. Too much mixing can cause an irregular shape, a tough crust, and tunnels.

To check muffins and quick bread loaves for doneness:

- ◆ Check the appearance. The crust should be golden brown, slightly rough, and shiny.
- ◆ The sides of the quick bread should have pulled away slightly from the sides of the pan.
- ◆ When the top is tapped gently, it should feel firm.

Check the recipe to see whether the product should cool in the pan. Some quick breads are best when served warm. Before removing muffins and loaves from the pan, first loosen them by running a spatula around the product.

Biscuit Method

Biscuits are mixed in a different way. The biscuit method of mixing gives biscuits their flaky texture.

1. Sift the dry ingredients together in a mixing bowl.

2. Add the shortening to the dry ingredients. Cut it in using a pastry blender, two table knives, or a fork. Stop when the mixture looks like large crumbs.

3. Add the milk. Mix with a fork to make a soft dough. The dough should come away from the sides of the bowl.



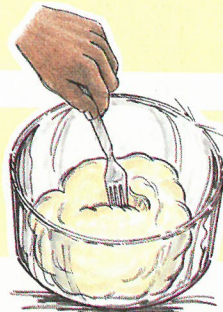
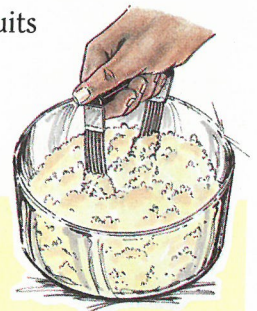
Lumpy batter (above) will give you a muffin that is well-shaped and evenly textured (below, left).



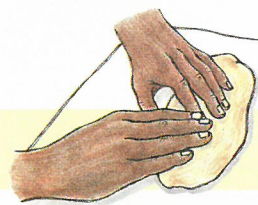
Properly mixed muffin



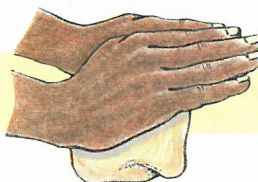
Over-mixed muffin



After biscuit dough is mixed, it is kneaded. To *knead* means to work or press the dough with your hands. Kneading helps gluten, the elastic structure of the dough, to form.



1. Turn the dough out onto a clean, lightly floured surface.



2. Gently fold the dough in half.



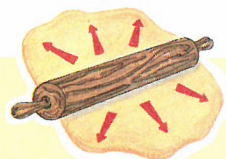
3. Push down on the dough with the heels of both hands.



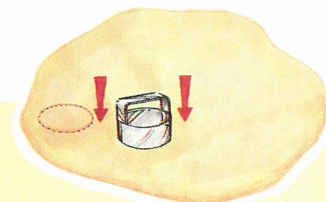
4. Give the dough a quarter turn. Continue to knead by repeating the folding and pushing process.

Biscuit dough should be kneaded for only about 30 seconds. If you knead too long, the biscuits will be tough.

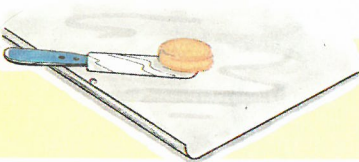
Next, roll and cut the biscuits:



1. Roll the dough out into a circle $\frac{1}{2}$ inch (1.3 cm) thick. Use light, gentle strokes.



2. Cut the biscuits. Dip the cutter in flour first. Cut straight down so the biscuits will be even.



3. Use a spatula or turner to move the biscuits to the baking sheet. Leave about 1 inch (2.5 cm) space between the biscuits.

4. Push the leftover dough together. Do not knead it. Roll and cut more biscuits.

Bake the biscuits in a preheated oven for the time given in the recipe. To test them for doneness:

- ◆ Check the color. The biscuits should be lightly browned on top. The sides will be a lighter, creamy color.
- ◆ Check the shape and height. The sides should be straight. The biscuits should be doubled in size.

Serve the biscuits while still warm or let them cool on a wire rack before storing.



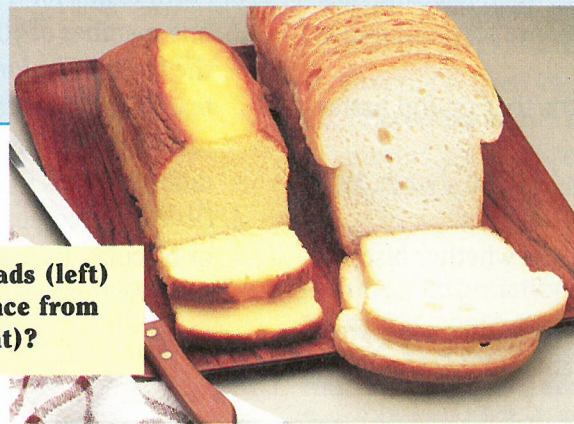
Yeast Breads

Yeast breads are leavened with yeast. It gives the breads a much-liked flavor and fragrance.

Active dry yeast is the most common type. It is sold in a package and does not need refrigeration. You can buy regular or quick-acting. Use yeast by the date on the package.

Yeast breads take considerably longer to make than quick breads. After the dough is mixed, it is kneaded for several minutes. Then it is allowed to rise for about an hour to give the yeast time to grow. Next, the dough is shaped. After the dough rises again, it is baked until the crust is golden brown.

For homemade taste in less time, you can buy refrigerated or frozen yeast dough. Refrigerated dough is ready to bake. Frozen dough is usually placed in a greased pan to thaw and rise before baking.



How do quick breads (left) differ in appearance from yeast breads (right)?

Microwave Hints

- If you don't have a microwave-safe muffin pan, arrange custard cups in a circle on a plate.
- To reheat quick breads, microwave uncovered at 100% power. One muffin takes about 10 seconds if at room temperature or 15 seconds if frozen. Do not overheat or the bread will be tough.

Microwaving Quick Breads

You can make muffins and other quick breads in the microwave oven. Usually a round or ring-shaped pan is used. Follow the directions in a microwave cookbook.

Quick breads made in the microwave have a heavier and coarser texture. In addition, they do not brown. To make up for the lack of color, you can add a topping, such as chopped nuts, toasted coconut, or a sugar and cinnamon mixture. After microwaving biscuits, you can brush them with melted butter or margarine and broil in a conventional oven.



When microwaving, fill muffin cups only half full.

Chapter 39 Review

Check the Facts

1. Name two differences between quick breads and yeast breads.
2. Name at least three nutrients that can be found in quick breads.
3. Are all quick breads more healthful than cake or cookies? Explain.
4. Describe how to store flour, sweeteners, baking soda, baking powder, fats, and oils.
5. Identify three convenience forms of quick breads.
6. Name at least two signs that muffin batter has been overmixed.
7. Describe how to knead biscuit dough. What happens if you knead too long?
8. What are two ways to tell whether biscuits are done baking?
9. How does a microwaved muffin compare to a conventionally baked one?

Ideas in Action

1. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using convenience quick bread products.
2. Ton Nguyen is new to the United States. In Ton's native country, muffins are not common. How would you describe to Ton what a muffin is like? Include appearance, doneness, and flavor in your description.
3. Form teams for a game of charades. Choose one member of your team to act out one of the steps in making biscuits. The rest of the team should try to guess what is being pantomimed. Take turns acting out different steps in biscuit making.
4. Develop a scorecard for evaluating muffins or biscuits. Include specific standards for how the product should look and taste.

Recipe Focus

1. Read the recipe for "Streusel Top Muffins." Make a list of the equipment you would need.
2. This recipe is an example of the muffin method of mixing. How does the muffin method differ from the biscuit method?

Streusel Top Muffins

Customary

Ingredients

Metric

½ cup	Brown sugar	75 mL
3 Tbsp.	All-purpose flour	45 mL
1 tsp.	Ground cinnamon	5 mL
1 Tbsp.	Melted butter or margarine	15 mL
¼ cup	Chopped nuts	50 mL
1¾ cup	Sifted, all-purpose flour	425 mL
¼ cup	Sugar	50 mL
2½ tsp.	Baking powder	13 mL
½ tsp.	Salt	2 mL
1	Egg	1
¾ cup	Skim milk	175 mL
½ cup	Butter or margarine, melted	75 mL



Yield: 10 to 12 muffins

Conventional Directions

Pan: Muffin pan

Temperature: 400°F (200°C)

1. **Preheat** oven to 400°F (200°C).
2. **Grease** muffin cups.
3. **Combine** first five ingredients in a small bowl. Set aside for streusel topping.
4. **Combine** 1¾ cup (425 mL) sifted flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt in a large mixing bowl. Set aside.
5. **Beat** the egg in a small bowl.
6. **Add** milk and ½ cup (75 mL) melted butter or margarine to the beaten egg. Mix well.
7. **Make** a well in the center of the dry ingredients.
8. **Pour** the liquid mixture all at once into the center of the dry ingredients.
9. **Stir** until the dry ingredients are just moistened, about 15 strokes. Do not overmix. Batter will be lumpy.

10. **Spoon** batter into muffin cups until they are ¾ full.

11. **Sprinkle** streusel topping mixture over each muffin.

12. **Bake** about 20 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center of a muffin comes out clean.

Microwave Directions

Pan: Microwave-safe muffin pan

Power Level: 100%

1. **Line** muffin pan with paper liners.
2. **Follow steps 3-11** of conventional directions, then continue with step 12 below.
12. **Microwave** at 100% power. For 4 to 6 muffins, microwave 2 minutes or until no longer doughy and top of muffin springs back when touched.

Nutrition Information

Per muffin (approximate): 195 calories, 4 g protein, 27 g carbohydrate, 8 g fat, 34 mg cholesterol, 229 mg sodium
Good source of: B vitamins