

Buttermilk

Julia Child, Baking with Julia
P. 210

3 cups all-purpose flour
1/3 cup sugar
2½-teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon baking soda
¾ teaspoon salt (Kosher preferably, thus a little more)
1 ½ sticks (6 ounces) cold unsalted butter, cut into small pieces
1 cup (approximately) buttermilk
1 tablespoon grated orange or lemon zest

2 ounces unsalted butter, melted, for brushing (HdeH or spray)
¼ cup sugar, for dusting



Photograph: Henri T. de Hahn

1. Position the oven racks to divide the oven into thirds and preheat the oven to 425F.
2. In a medium bowl, stir the flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, and salt together with a fork. Add the cold butter pieces and, using your fingertips (preferred first choice), a pastry blender, or two knives, works the butter into the dry ingredients until the mixture resembles coarse cornmeal. It's OK if some largish pieces of butter remain –they'll add to the scones flakiness.
3. Pour in 1 cup buttermilk, toss in the zest, and mix with the fork only until the ingredients are just moistened –you'll have a soft dough with a rough look. (If the dough looks dry, add another tablespoon of buttermilk.) Gather dough into a ball, pressing it gently so that it holds together, turn it out onto a lightly floured work surface, and knead it very briefly (HdeH no need to do this)
4. (HdeH –take some of the dough and gently press it together in the desired size and set on an ungreased baking sheet leaving a little space between each one. Repeat with the remaining dough.
5. (HdeH Spray or baste gently with melted butter. Sprinkle with sugar).
6. Bake the scones for 10 to 12 minutes, until both the tops and bottoms are golden. Transfer the scones to a rack to cool slightly. These are best served warm but are just fine at room temperature.
7. If you're not going to eat the scones the day they are made, wrap them airtight and freeze; they'll stay fresh for a month. To serve, defrost the scones at room temperature in their wrappers, then unwrap and reheat on a baking sheet for 5 minutes in a 350F oven.