

Cream Scones

From the America's Test Kitchen Cookbook (2001)

2 cups (280 grams) unbleached all-purpose flour, I use King Arthur bread flour.

1 tablespoon (15 grams) baking powder

3 tablespoons (40 grams) sugar

1/2 teaspoon (3 grams) fine sea or table salt

5 tablespoons (70 grams) chilled, unsalted butter, cut into 1/4-inch cubes

1/2 cup currants (about 80 grams; I use dried cherries, crystalized ginger)

1 cup (235 ml) heavy cream

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 425°F.
2. Place flour, baking powder, sugar and salt in large bowl or work bowl of food processor fitted with steel blade. Whisk together or pulse six times.
3. If making by hand, use two knives, a pastry blender or your fingertips and quickly cut in butter until mixture resembles coarse meal, with a few slightly larger butter lumps. Stir in currants. If using food processor, remove cover and distribute butter evenly over dry ingredients. Cover and pulse 12 times, each pulse lasting 1 second. Add currants and pulse one more time. Transfer dough to large bowl.
4. Stir in heavy cream with a rubber spatula or fork until dough begins to form, about 30 seconds. (Note from Eric: A fork works well. It might seem like the mix won't come together. It will end up being fairly dry and crumbly. If your mix seems especially dry add another splash of heavy cream but be careful not to overdo it. You just need to get it into a damp ball you can cut your scones from).
5. Transfer dough and all dry, floury bits to countertop and knead dough by hand just until it comes together into a rough, sticky ball, 5 to 10 seconds. Form scones by either a) pressing the dough into an 8-inch cake pan, then turning the dough out onto a lightly floured work surface, cutting the dough into 8 wedges with either a knife or bench scraper (the book's suggestion) or b) patting the dough onto a lightly floured work surface into a 3/4-inch thick circle, cutting pieces with a biscuit cutter, and pressing remaining scraps back into another piece (what I did) and cutting until dough has been used up. (Be warned if you use this latter method, the scones that are made from the remaining scraps will be much lumpier and less pretty, but taste fine. As in, I understand why they suggested the first method.)
6. Place rounds or wedges on ungreased baking sheet and bake until scone tops are light brown, 12 to 15 minutes. Cool on wire rack for at least 10 minutes. Serve warm or at room temperature.