

Biscuits, Hard Tack, and Crackers in Early America

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Illustration by Charles M Russell: "Camp Cook's Troubles"

In early America, biscuits, crackers, and hard tack were similar, all made from wheat flour without yeast or leavening. Hard tack was very simple. Biscuit was a word for a variety of baked goods, ranging from something plain and close to hard tack, to luxury items like small cakes or cookies today. Crackers were essentially thin, and hard, plain biscuits. Over time American biscuits and crackers evolved into the forms we know today. Biscuit is the oldest word in common use; next came hard tack (replacing ship's biscuit), and then cracker.

True hard tack is the simplest of all these, consisting of only whole wheat flour, water, and sometimes salt. Hard tack was made in large quantities for navy and army use by commercial bakers using large brick bake ovens. Old time bakers sometimes baked hard tack twice, or dried it in a warm oven, apparently to hasten the final hard and dry stage so it could be packed and shipped. Hard tack was most commonly called ships biscuit up to the mid-nineteenth century. It will last nearly forever when kept dry. There is a legend that the U.S. Army in the 1890s issued hard tack baked for the Civil War thirty years before; or alternately that hard tack made for the Mexican War in 1846 was later issued in the Civil War. Hard tack never has any shortening or sugar, or eggs or milk, any one of which will cause it to spoil with time.

Here is a recipe for hard tack from the British Royal Naval Museum Library ¹ :

Ships Biscuits The Naval "Hard tack"

To produce a plain ships biscuit, a medium coarse stone-ground whole meal flour should be used. Most flour used today is milled from North American wheat or similar hard grain cereals. It would be difficult to produce an historically authentic biscuit from modern refined flour.

Add water to 1lb wholemeal flour and ¼ oz salt to make a stiff dough. Leave for 1/2 hour and then roll out very thickly. Separate in to 5 or 7 biscuits. Bake in a hot oven approx. 420 degrees F for 30 minutes. The biscuits should then be left undisturbed in a warm dry atmosphere to harden and dry out.

A recent recipe for hard tack uses some refined white flour which will make the hard tack a little less dense ² :

Combine 2 cups of whole wheat flour, 2 cups all-purpose flour, and one half to one teaspoon salt in a bowl. Slowly stir in one and half cups of water [more or less water may be needed depending on your flour]. Knead the dough for about five minutes or until smooth. Let the dough rest for about ten minutes. Roll dough into a rectangle about one half inch thick on a greased baking sheet. Score at 3 inch intervals. Prick with the times of a fork. Bake at 325 for about 50 minutes, or until lightly browned. Makes 15 biscuits.

Right after baking, these are easy to chew. They taste like whole wheat bread and are appealing to eat. As weeks go by they dry and become harder and harder, eventually reaching the classic tooth-breaking degree of hardness, and then can be carved, sawn, or drilled like wood. If forced to eat hard tack in this state, shave off shavings into hot coffee with a knife, or grind it into soup.

One often associates “hard tack” with the age of sail, including perhaps the American colonial period through the Napoleonic wars, but I have not found any mention of "hard tack" earlier than 1812. The first appearance, in 1812, is in John Luttig's *Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition* ³:

"... I saw the Sioux of the Mississippi, in the Evening they danced and we gave them some Biscuit hardtack and 1 Carrot Tobacco they bought plenty Meat with them and gave plenty to the Boats." (July 23, 1812)

This precedes the supposedly first use of “hard tack” listed by the *Oxford English Dictionary* by 30 years. Before 1860, biscuit or “ships biscuit” was clearly more common in English usage than “hard tack,” at least in print. Many early journals mention “biscuit” in a context where durable hard tack is indicated.

The two-word form “hard tack” was common, in contrast to “soft tack” which meant normal bread. After 1860 the one-word form “hardtack” increased in usage, and became dominant by 1900. The first common use of both names for hard tack arose during the American Civil War. Reading journals of the mountain men (ca. 1823-1840) makes clear that “biscuit” meant hard tack, while “hard tack” or “hardtack” is almost never seen. There is, as yet, no sign that the name hard tack was used before 1812. Ships biscuit or ships bread was the name for this food item, even in land settings.

The American hoe cake, johnny cake, or journey cake was another simple flat bread, something like hard tack, consisting of only flour and water, and salt if available. Usually corn meal, not wheat flour, was the main ingredient. Unlike hard tack, it was baked on, or in front of, an open fire and eaten on the spot. Troops at Valley Forge made crude bread from nothing but wheat flour and water baked on flat stones. Such primitive forms of unleavened flat bread, such as the tortilla, baked directly on a fire, not in an oven, are found the world over. That is another topic!

Biscuits

Biscuits in early North America began as something like hard tack in composition, only a little richer, and similar to the crackers of the time, tending to be flat and crunchy or at least chewy. None of the three were risen breads. Today American biscuits are soft and light due to leavening provided by baking powder or baking soda, and often include eggs and sugar and sometimes fruit or cheese. Some modern biscuits would have been regarded as tea cakes as recently as a century ago.

There were sweet biscuits as well as plain biscuits in the 18th century and earlier. The sweet biscuits have more complex recipes, with such things as almonds and caraway seeds and in a few cases more sugar than flour. They appear in recipe books of the period alongside fancy confections, and the ingredients show they were treats from the wealthy kitchen, not something of the bastion, camp, or trail.

Here is one such sweet biscuit recipe, from *The Frugal Housewife or Complete Woman Cook* by Susannah Carter (Boston, 1772; New York, 1792, 1803; Philadelphia, 1796, 1802, 1803):

Common Biscuits.

Beat up six eggs, with a spoonful of rose water, and a spoonful of sack; then add a pound of fine powdered sugar, and a pound of flour; mix these into the eggs by degrees, with an ounce of coriander seeds; shape them on white thin paper or tin moulds, in any form you please. Beat the white of an egg, and with a feather rub it over, and dust fine sugar over them. Set them in an oven moderately heated, till they rise and come to a good colour; and if you have no stove to dry them in, put them into the oven at night, and let them stand till morning.

This collection was originally published in 1765 in London and Dublin. The recipes are clearly for the wealthy, having items such as lemons for flavoring, and "a pound of fine powdered sugar." The many American reprintings indicate a demand for this kind of cooking in the early United States as well.

And there were intermediate forms of biscuit, with, for example some sugar or butter, or both, and even spices, without attaining the grandeur of the most exotic recipes. The Tavern biscuit recipe below is an example.

"Biscuit" covered a very wide range of baked goods which had in common being small individual forms of bread, richer and more refined than hardtack while less durable, and never being risen with yeast (well, not normally). On the other hand, they were not as thin and hard as crackers. Incidentally "biscuit" is an old French word meaning "twice-cooked," another connection between hard tack and biscuit, probably dating from when they were nearly the same thing. Oddly the French term for the twice-cooked bread, ships biscuit, moved to the American biscuit, which is never twice cooked.

In early America the key ingredients for plain biscuits were shortening, milk, and flour. Compared to hard tack, milk replaces water, and shortening is added. These ingredients, richer than the ingredients composing hard tack, made a more appealing fare than hard tack, but the result is unlike our modern biscuits. Here is a recipe published in 1817 ⁴:

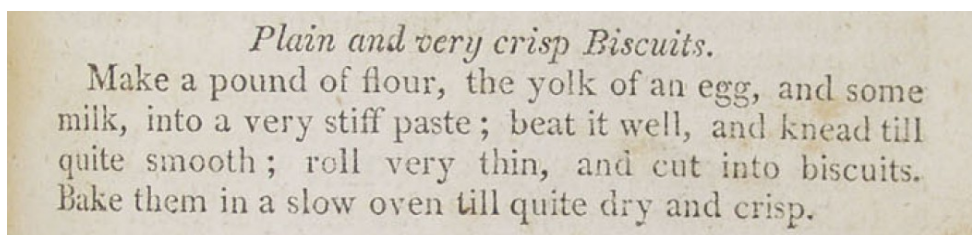
Hard Biscuits. Warm two ounces of butter in as much skimmed milk as will make a pound of flour into a very stiff paste, beat it with a rolling pin, and work it very smooth. Roll it thin, and cut it into round biscuits; prick them full of holes with a fork. About six minutes will bake them.

Six minutes is *very* fast; indicating that the biscuits were rolled thin. Even if the biscuits are rolled to half an inch thick and the oven at 450, twelve minutes might be too little. If 'thin' meant about an eighth or a quarter of an inch, and the oven was hot enough to bake them in six minutes, the result probably would be closer to what we call crackers. I expect this recipe is representative of early American plain biscuits, beginning to evolve away from hardtack.

Sometimes, but not always, salt or eggs were included in early biscuits, such as the biscuit recipe with an egg in Amelia Simmon's *American Cookery* of 1796:

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Biscuit.
One pound flour, two ounces butter, one egg, wet with milk and break while oven is heating, and in the same proportion.

No idea what "break ... in the same proportion" means. No mention of how thick these were, nor how hard they were baked. Maria Eliza Ketelby Rundell's *A New System of Domestic Cookery*, 1807, has a recipe for plain biscuits with an egg yolk, but no butter or other shortening:



Plain and very crisp Biscuits.
Make a pound of flour, the yolk of an egg, and some milk, into a very stiff paste; beat it well, and knead till quite smooth; roll very thin, and cut into biscuits. Bake them in a slow oven till quite dry and crisp.

Rolled very thin, and and baked until quite dry and crisp: again this is closer to crackers than modern biscuits. Note the similarity of the three recipes above for plain biscuits.

Mary Randolph's *The Virginia Housewife* of 1824 has a "Tavern Biscuit" recipe, below, which includes more ingredients: sugar, spices, and brandy. These are very appealing, somewhere between modern biscuits and cookies:

TAVERN BISCUIT.
To one pound of flour, add half a pound of sugar, half a pound of butter, some mace and nutmeg powdered, and a glass of brandy or wine; wet' it with milk, and when well kneaded, roll it thin, cut it in shapes, and bake it quickly.

I use 4 cups of flour, 3 ounces of brandy, and a generous $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp mace and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp nutmeg, and bake at 420 degrees for about 15 minutes. This makes about 40 two-inch biscuits. In a group they generally are all eaten, with enthusiasm. Susannah Carter might have used *one whole grated nutmeg* judging by some of her recipes; they sometimes used a lot of nutmeg in baked goods.

Speaking of taverns, travelers on the frontier in early America mention biscuit as a common food. Henry Brackenridge's *Journal of a Voyage up The Missouri River in 1811* describes the daily fare of the boatmen ⁸:

In the course of this evening, had as much reason to admire the dexterity of our Canadians and Creoles, as I had before to condemn their frivolity. I believe an American could not be brought to support with patience the fatiguing labors, and submission, which these men endure. At this season, when the water is exceedingly cold, they leap in without a moment's hesitation. Their food consists of lied corn homony for breakfast, a slice of fat pork and a biscuit for dinner, and a pot of mush for supper, with a pound of tallow in it. Yet this is better than the common fair; but we were about to make an extraordinary voyage, the additional expense was not regarded."

John Ball (*Across the Plains to Oregon, 1832*) describes frontier cabin life:

...when we called at the cabin, the most were constructed of logs, we were hospitably received and lodged and fed in their best manner and at a very reasonable rate. As to their mode of cookery I noticed one thing to me peculiar, they cooked thin bread as well as meat and vegetables at each meal. It was a corn hoe or Johnny Cake or wheat flour biscuit, and the Johnny Cake made only with salt and water. Some think such is not good but I do. between Jefferson and Lexington on the Missouri River.

The early western artist George Catlin describes a solitary crossing of the Great Plains in 1834:

So, one fine morning, Charley was brought up and saddled, and a bear-skin and a buffalo robe being spread upon his saddle, and a coffee-pot and tin cup tied to it also -- with a few pounds of hard biscuit in my portmanteau -- with my fowling piece in my hand, and my pistols in my belt -- with my sketch-book slung on my back, and a small pocket compass in my pocket; I took leave of Fort Gibson... The distance from Fort Gibson to the Missouri, where I struck the river, is about five hundred miles, and most of the way a beautiful prairie, in a wild and uncultivated state without roads and without bridges, over a great part of which I steered my course with my Pocket-compass, fording and swimming the streams in the best manner I could; shooting prairie hens, and occasionally catching fish, which I cooked for my meals, and slept upon the ground at night.

"Hard biscuit" surely was ships biscuit or hard tack, but regardless of that, Catlin's unhurried crossing of hundreds of miles of plains must have been a wonderful experience, at least for those who love to ramble across unlimited America in its natural state.

Crackers in Early America

"Cracker" like "hard tack" appears to have become commonplace in the 19th century, at least in print. Apparently early crackers were much like the biscuits of the time as far as ingredients went, but were rolled thinner before baking, one-quarter inch thick, or perhaps a little less. Air drying after baking would make them brittle, hence the crack in cracker. Like hard tack, they must have been pretty hard and fairly imperishable. True hard tack was made with whole wheat and water and no shortening; while crackers could have shortening and milk, and usually were made with bolted (white) flour. Crackers like biscuits had no leavening agent such as soda until the 1830s at the earliest.

Here is an early style cracker recipe from a modern collection of old recipes (11). The sugar may be a modern addition, and certainly may be omitted and still make an historic cracker.

4 cups all-purpose flour
2 Tablespoons sugar
1 teaspoon salt

1 / 4 cup butter
1 cup milk

Sift together flour, sugar and salt. Cut in butter with two knives until mixture looks mealy. Stir in enough milk to make a stiff dough. Roll about 1 / 4 inch thick on a lightly floured board and cut with a large round cookie cutter. Prick surface in many places with fork tines and brush lightly with milk. Place on an ungreased baking sheet and bake in a 425 degree oven for 15 to 18 minutes or until light gold in color. Makes two dozen or more.

This is an interesting recipe. Exactly as described (and use a slat 1/4 inch thick as a gage, to get the thickness correct), the result is a large thick wafer, often a little chewy, as close to a biscuit as to a modern cracker. As they dry with time, they become almost crunchy. However, if you cut the sugar by half or more, roll the dough to 1/8 inch thick, cut into squares about 1 1/2 inch across, omit the brushing with milk, and bake until brown, the result is a lot like a modern cracker, crunchy right out of the oven.

The old time cracker barrel, open in the general store, insured that crackers had time to dry. I suspect the crackers made from the above recipe are close to what was in the cracker barrel.

In the recipe above, the main ingredients are those of early biscuits as well as crackers - flour, shortening, milk, and salt. The close similarity of biscuits and crackers lasted a long time. A 1901 recipe for soda crackers (12) describes what most biscuit makers would call southern beaten biscuits, based on ingredients and handling – the handling being beating the dough for *half an hour*. However unlike biscuits they are rolled to only 1 / 8 inch thickness before baking. The recipe says to bake “in a moderate oven till they are hard and crisp, but not brown. Then hang in a muslin bag for about two days until thoroughly dry.” After that, they must have cracked or at least crunched when eaten.

Beaten biscuits involved beating the dough with a rolling pin (or a "heavy mallet") for as much as half an hour. I assume this was to develop the gluten to aid rising - before baking soda appeared. Biscuits using soda or baking powder, in contrast, should be kneaded as little as possible.

A recipe for “Shaker Crackers,” in the *Better Homes and Gardens Heritage Cook Book* (1975) which includes recipes from all periods of U.S. history, is almost identical to the “Baking Powder Biscuits” in the *Boston Cooking School Cook Book* (1941). Both recipes list the same ingredients, in the same order, with slightly different proportions. The essential difference between these “crackers” and “biscuits” is that the crackers are rolled to 1/ 4 inch thick, while the biscuits are rolled to 3 / 4 inch. The use of baking soda and baking powder shows that these recipes must be from the second half of the 19th century, at the earliest. This is an indication of the relation between crackers and biscuits, though not definitive since these editions may have altered earlier recipes.

The Beginnings of Modern Biscuits and Crackers –

Pearlash, Baking Soda, and Baking Powder

The American biscuits and crackers we know today descend from American inventions in leavening agents made in the late 18th and 19th centuries.

"Perhaps the single most important innovation in American Cookery was the use of pearlash as a chemical leavening for dough, an American practice which has influenced worldwide baking methods. Prior to the late 1700s, the preferred lightness in baked goods was attained by beating air along with the eggs, or adding yeast or various spirits to produce a leavening. But by the first publication of *American Cookery*, Americans were adding pearlash (a refined form of potash, an impure potassium carbonate obtained from wood ashes, and a common household staple in the early American kitchen) to their doughs to produce carbon dioxide quickly. This was the forerunner of modern baking powders which were soon to revolutionize both home and commercial baking, here and elsewhere."

from "*Feeding America: The Historic American Cookbook Project*" ¹³.

"*American Cookery, or the art of dressing viands, fish, poultry, and vegetables...*", by Amelia Simmons (Hartford: 1796) was the first cookbook written by an American, and employs American ingredients. It was widely reprinted, and copied.

In the 1830s bakers began using baking soda, then called saleratus, to leaven dough. Reacting with an acidic ingredient in dough, such as vinegar (acetic acid) or sour milk (lactic acid), baking soda releases bubbles of carbon dioxide, the gas that makes soda pop fizz. This was all to the good: rather than taking the trouble and time to make a yeast starter, or do without leavening at all as had been the case until then for biscuits and crackers, bakers had a source of instant leavening, right in the dough. Biscuits could be light and more appealing, and they became a common part of American cooking. The new crackers made with baking soda were called soda crackers, and crackers began their evolution into what we know today.

Here is an early soda cracker recipe. The acidic reactant for the baking powder is provided by sour milk, something like our buttermilk:

Sour milk	1 teaspoon butter, softened
1 /2 teaspoon baking soda	1 teaspoon lard
3 cups flour	salt

Mix enough sour milk, in which the soda has been dissolved, into the flour to make a very stiff dough. Knead well working in butter and lard, and roll out very thin. Cut, shaping the crackers as you wish, sprinkle with coarse salt, and prick them in patterns with a fork. Bake the soda crackers in a moderate oven (350 degrees) until they are crisp. (20 – 30 minutes)

This recipe makes nice thick soda crackers, especially after drying a few days. Soda was a new and valuable addition to baking, and it continues in use today. However, there are two problems with baking soda. One is that sources of acid are not always of uniform strength, yielding

different amounts of leavening most every time you try. The other is that the leavening gas appears in the dough immediately; how much remains in the dough when baked depended on how the dough is handled before baking, another irregular factor. For some recipes, such as buttermilk pancakes, the rapid generation of bubbles in the dough is just what you want, so long as you do not stir the dough much, after the bubbles appear.

The Soda Biscuit

Biscuits as well as crackers benefited from baking soda. Here is a early soda biscuit by Alice Kirk Grierson of the 10th U.S. Cavalry, of Texas and Arizona, written in the 1880s (published as *An Army Wife's Cookbook With Household Hints and Home Remedies*, 1972):

1 quart flour, 2 heaping tablespoonfuls lard, 2 cups sweet milk, or you can take can milk, 1 teaspoonful soda, 2 teaspoonfuls cream of tartar, 1 teaspoonful salt. Rub soda and cream of tartar into flour dry. Next the lard. Lastly the milk. Work with as little handling as possible. The dough should be very soft. Cut more than half inch thick and bake in a quick oven.

Here is a similar soda biscuit recipe, simply to show how recipes for biscuits naturally vary. This is from *The Universal Cookery Book* by Gertrude Strohm (New York: White Stokes and Allen, 1887).

Soda Biscuits.

One quart of flour, a pint of buttermilk, half a teaspoonful of soda dissolved in the milk ; half a teaspoonful of salt ; a piece of lard about the size of a large egg, rubbed in the flour. Mix well together, roll out about an inch thick, and cut into biscuits. Bake in a quick oven.

The first step to improve use of baking soda was to use a reactant for the soda of consistent strength, cream of tartar, which was in the 1830s a by-product of wine production in France and Italy.

Here is a soda cracker recipe with cream of tartar.

7 oz. flour	1 cup shortening
1 teaspoon salt	1 teaspoon baking soda
2 teaspoons cream of tartar	1 1/2 cup cold water

Mix flour, salt, and cream of tartar, then rub in shortening. Dissolve soda in cold water. Mix all ingredients. Roll out and bake in a quick oven (about 400 degrees).

This is like a recipe for pie crust or puff pastry, plus leavening and salt. For best results chill the shortening before use, and use really cold water. Lard makes more tender crackers, but butter has a better flavor.

Mixing in the soda with the water at the last step delays the generation of the leavening gas as long as possible. This recipe uses water in place of milk. “Water crackers” are made with water rather than milk, so this is both a soda cracker and a water cracker.

Americans persisted in seeking improvements to baking soda, and by 1859 “baking powder” was developed. Baking powder includes baking soda plus other materials to provide the needed reactant when mixed in dough, plus chemicals that produce leavening when heated, not when the dough is mixed, and a drying agent such as corn starch to prevent reactions in the package. No longer did a recipe need an acidic component, and some or all of the leavening action occurred when baked, not when the dough was being handled.

Here is a Shaker recipe for “crackers” using baking powder.

1 cup all-purpose flour	1 /4 cup butter
1 teaspoon baking powder	1 /4 cup milk
1 /4 teaspoon salt	

Stir together thoroughly the flour, baking powder, and salt. Cut in butter until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Add milk; stir until the mixture forms a ball. Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface. Knead dough gently eight to ten strokes. Roll the dough to 1 /4 inch thickness. Dip 2 1 /2 inch biscuit cutter in flour; cut dough with it. Place dough rounds on greased baking sheet. Bake at 400 degrees for 10 minutes. Split the crackers with a knife. Return to oven and bake until golden brown, 4 to 6 minutes longer. Makes 24 crackers.

These are basically what we call biscuits, but split in half and toasted.

“Quick breads” using baking soda or baking powder became a standard of American cooking, and were something of a novelty for European visitors to America. You could make fresh biscuits when ordered by restaurant guests already seated at the table, and of course biscuits became commonplace for ranchers, miners, and frontiersmen, in fact, everyone in America.

The American Baking Powder Biscuit

“Certainly no bread in America has been more popular over a longer time than baking powder biscuits. In fact, in many homes they were baked three times a day in great quantities, and were eaten hot, with butter and honey or preserves, along with every meal.”

James Beard

You can find biscuits using baking powder or baking soda in most American cookbooks for the past century and a half. With the baking powder biscuit we reach the most famous American biscuit, the biscuit known since the Civil War, the biscuit of the “old west,” of mining boom towns, and farms, of fishing ports and hunting camps, of the cattle trail and the cavalry patrol, of Theodore Roosevelt in the Dakotas, John Muir in the Yosemite, and Jack London in Alaska. The next recipe includes the customary ingredients for the baking powder biscuit, and shows the common proportions found in several historic biscuit recipes and the variations among them.

The Genuine, All-American, Ranch, Camp, and Trail Baking Powder Biscuit

3 cups all purpose flour or bread flour
3 to 4 ½ teaspoons baking powder; usually 3 teaspoons
½ to 1 ½ teaspoons salt; usually 1 teaspoon
3 to 8 tablespoons butter or other shortening; most commonly 6 tablespoons
1 cup milk, or half milk and half water; a little more in a the dry western climate.

Sift dry ingredients into bowl. Cut in shortening with a fork or two knives until fine meal. Mix well. Make a well in the center of the mixture and gently add all the milk. Stir quickly with fork until dough pulls away from bowl sides and follows fork. Dough should be very soft. Do not add so much milk it makes a sticky ball. Turn dough onto a lightly floured surface. Knead gently 10 or 12 strokes; you can knead as much as a minute if you use the full amount of baking powder. Roll out or pat to ¼ to ¾ inch thickness; as little as ¼ inch for thin crisp biscuits or ½ to ¾ inch for high soft biscuits. Cut as rounds or squares.

To bake in an oven, place biscuits on ungreased baking sheet, well separated for crunchy sides, or have biscuits nearly touching on the sheet for soft sides. Bake at 450 degrees for 12 to 15 minutes.

For camp cooking, use a 12 to 14 inch dutch oven. Preheat lid and bottom. Use 7-8 coals under the bottom and 16-18 coals on the lid. Bake 10 to 15 minutes. Rotate lid and bottom a quarter circle, in opposite directions, every 4 or 5 minutes for even heating.

Split and eat with butter, honey or jam. Makes 12 to 30 biscuits, depending on thickness and size.

Milk was available to cowboys on the trail since Americans had also invented canned milk in the mid-nineteenth century, but that is another story. If you find an old original recipe for baking powder biscuits, it may use an old-fashioned tartrate or phosphate type baking powder, which requires twice as much as modern baking powder. That much is too much modern baking powder.

These are plain biscuits; good if eaten as soon as done and rather bland later. Butter, syrup, jam, or molasses are typical toppings. This is the basic historic American baking powder biscuit.

Here is my favorite modern biscuit recipe, using baking powder and baking soda. Buttermilk adds some flavor. This recipe is by Andrea Rutledge, a winner in a "Powder Milk Biscuit" contest held about 1985 by a public radio station in Colorado. All I have now is a worn note card.

Andrea Rutledge's Powder Milk Biscuits

2 cups plus 2 Tablespoons unbleached flour
2 ½ teaspoons double acting baking powder (above 5000 feet, 2 ¼ teaspoons)
½ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
1/3 cup butter (texture is best best if frozen)
¾ cup buttermilk. May need more in a dry climate.

Sift together dry ingredients in bowl. Cut butter into mixture. Blend in buttermilk until dough sticks together loosely, but is not a heavy sticky lump. Knead on board a few times

until smooth. Roll out to ½ inch thickness. Cut with jelly glass and dip tops in melted butter. Cook on a greased cookie sheet 15 minutes at 450 degrees Fahrenheit.

In all recipes in this article, the amount of liquid needed depends on your flour and on how dry your climate is.

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