

# BISCUITS

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Biscuit is one of the most important snack terms used in an average household. We cannot think of tea without biscuits. A normal morning or afternoon tea is generally accompanied by plain biscuits whereas a high tea (i.e. a formal tea party) would include fancy biscuits like cream crackers, coconut cookies etc. A lot of different varieties of biscuits are being produced by large scale manufacturers with automatic plants, where biscuits are packaged and distributed within a short time of leaving the oven. But even in this era of large scale production some special varieties of biscuits are still produced by small bakers. The finer points of making delicious biscuits at home are discussed here.

## 2.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, you will be able to :

- classify biscuits on basis of method of preparation;
- describe the procedure of baking different kinds of biscuits;
- evolve and follow appropriate recipes for baking various types of biscuits;
- identify the faults that can arise if appropriate procedures are not followed and give suggestions for rectification.

## 2.3 CLASSIFICATION OF BISCUITS

The taste and crispness of a biscuit depends upon the raw material used and the method of making. Depending upon these two factors, we can broadly divide the biscuits into the following categories  
Biscuits made from :

1. pastry dough
  2. creamed dough
  3. egg white mixture
  4. whisked egg dough
  5. doughs rich in honey and other sugar syrups.
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## 2.4 BISCUITS MADE FROM PASTRY DOUGH

We can make both sweet and savoury biscuits from this dough. Two basic pastry doughs can be used for making biscuits—short crust dough and puff dough. We are going to learn the making of short crust dough in this chapter. Puff dough, which requires a considerable amount of skill and finesse, will be discussed later in a detailed chapter on various pastries.

**The Short Crust Dough** — This basically consists of flour, fat, and a moistening liquid. Flour provides the bulk and fat contributes tenderness or shortness to the biscuit. Sugar and egg, if included in the recipes, produce richer products i.e. sweeter and better taste.

The special points to be taken care of while producing good short crust biscuits are :

1. Keep ingredients cool.
2. Work in a cool area
3. Handle the ingredients as little as possible as this results in rougher biscuits.
4. Too much handling of dough also results in fat becoming oily which is not desirable.
5. Use ice cold water for binding the ingredients. Do not add too much water.
6. Before rolling, chill the dough in a freezer so that butter becomes firm. The resting period also relaxes the gluten in the flour thus making the dough less elastic and easier to roll.

### (A) JAM TARTS

*The ingredients:*

*For Short crust paste*

Flour	—	120g
Margerine	—	60g
Baking Powder	—	1/4 tea spoon
Castor Sugar	—	10g

*For Filling*

Jam - 60g

*The Method*

1. Sieve flour and baking powder in a thali/tray.



2. Cut the margarine into small pieces with a palette knife and rub it lightly with the finger tips until it resembles bread-crumbs.
3. Add castor sugar and mix lightly.
4. Sprinkle ice cold water a little at a time and make soft dough without kneading. Work in a cool area to avoid fat from melting.
5. Dust the clean marble top with flour and roll the dough lightly to 1/4" thickness.
6. Cut the dough with a biscuit cutter which is of the same size as the tart mould.
7. Prick each tart with a match-stick/fork to make some small holes. This will prevent the tarts from puffing during baking.
8. Line the tart moulds with some fat and dust with flour.
9. Fill each tart with jam upto 2/3 level.
10. Bake in a preheated oven at 180°C for 12 minutes. When golden brown, remove from the oven and cool on a cooling rack.

**Garnishing** — Refers to decoration. Roll out a small ball of the short crust paste thinly, cut into thin strips. Place a twist of this strip on top of the jam and place half a cherry on the top.

### (B) RICH BISCUITS

*The ingredients:*

Flour	— 250g
Icing Sugar	— 100g
Butter	— 125g
Salt	— ½ tea spoon
Baking Powder	— ½ tea spoon
Egg	— 1
Vanilla essence	— ½ tea spoon
or grated lemon rind	— 1 tea spoon

For egg and caramel glaze

Egg yolk of 2 eggs, sugar - 20g, water - 2.5 ml.

*Method :*

1. Sieve the flour, salt and baking powder and put into a mixing bowl.
2. Add icing sugar and butter cut into small cubes.
3. With your finger tips, rub the butter into dry ingredients until it is evenly distributed and the consistency of the mixture is like bread crumbs.

4. Mix egg, egg yolk and flavouring.
5. Mix, knead slightly and shape into a ball.
6. Place in the refrigerator to chill for 30 minutes.
7. Flatten the ball with your hand and then roll to a thickness of  $\frac{1}{8}$  of an inch using a rolling pin and dry flour.
8. With a round biscuit cutter (4 inches in diameter) cut out 10-12 biscuits, leaving as few dough scraps as possible.
9. Gather the dough scraps gently and press them together.
10. Flour the surface and again roll to  $\frac{1}{8}$  of an inch, cut out.
11. Using a palette knife, transfer each biscuit to a greased tray in rows.
12. To prepare egg and caramel glaze : put sugar and water in a heavy bottomed saucepan and cook on medium heat, stirring lightly until it becomes a rich, red brown. Break up egg yolks with a fork and pour into the water and caramel mixture until the glaze is deep golden-brown.
13. Paint each biscuit with the glaze, taking care to keep the glaze off the baking sheet. When finished, glaze them for the second time. Then with the tines of a fork, scratch marks on the biscuits in square, diamonds or triangles.
14. Bake in a preheated oven at 200°C for about 15 minutes. Do not judge whether the biscuits are done by the colour of the tops, which will be dark from the glaze and will give a false impression. Instead, check the undersides which should be golden at the end of cooking.
15. Arrange the biscuits on a rack as soon as they come out of the oven to allow proper cooling.

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### INTEXT QUESTION 2.1

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State true or False (T/F)

1. Pastry dough should be kneaded well to get crisp pastry dough biscuits.
  2. Cold area is more suitable for making of biscuits.
  3. Chilling of dough before rolling results in better texture of biscuits.
  4. We use warm water for binding the ingredients so that binding is easier.
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## 2.5 BISCUITS MADE FROM CREAMED DOUGH

Creaming is the process of beating together butter and sugar so that air bubbles are forced into the batter. The aerated mixture is then moistened with eggs. Finally flour is added to make the dough. This creamed dough is very versatile and is the starting point for more biscuits than any other dough.

Creamed dough provides many opportunities for imaginative shaping. It can be firm enough to be rolled out and cut with biscuit cutter into various attractive shapes, like circles, hearts, diamonds, squares etc. We use biscuit cutters for getting these basic shapes. A less firm dough can be simply dropped from a spoon to produce chunky, irregular shapes. You can also pipe various shapes by using a piping bag and nozzle.

Further variations can be made by changing proportions of the basic mixture by increasing the quantity of egg (it will form cake-like biscuits) or a few drops of flavouring essence or grated rind of citrus fruits or ground spices. You can also blend in raisins, nuts, currants or chopped crystallized. Chocolate can also be blended with dough to get darker chocolate taste.

Any of the icings, glazes or garnishes (that you learn about in coming chapters) can be used to flavour and decorate the biscuits.

### Points requiring attention

1. In this method of biscuit making creaming is the most important step as it aerates the mixture by incorporating air bubbles. Creaming should be carried on properly so that the mixture increases in volume and becomes light and fluffy.
2. While adding eggs, sometimes the mixture may look curdled, but the flour will bind it together and there is no need to panic.
3. Add flour gently and a little at a time. Avoid over working the dough as this would strengthen the gluten, making the dough tough when baked.

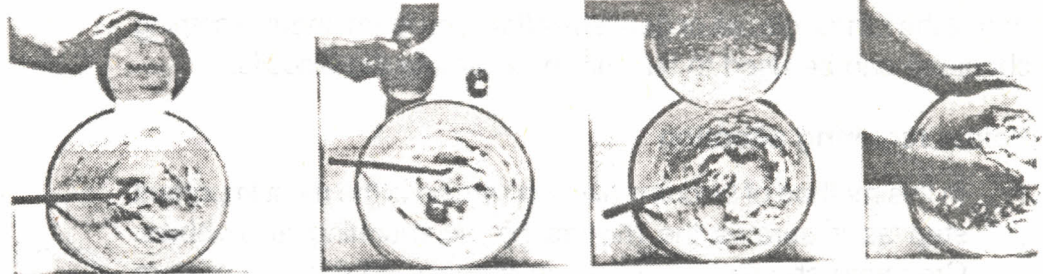
### FRUIT BISCUITS

#### *The ingredients:*

Flour	—	325 g
Margarine	—	250g
Icing Sugar	—	190g
Egg	—	1
Baking Powder	—	¼ tea spoon
Glazed cherries	—	50g

*Method:*

1. Cream fat and icing sugar in a clean enamel bowl with a wooden spoon till the mixture is light and fluffy.
2. Add egg and cream and beat again for about a minute.
3. Sieve flour and baking powder and mix it in the creamed mixture, taking care not to knead too much.
4. Chop glazed cherries and mix in the soft dough.
5. Dust the marble top with some flour and roll out the prepared dough very lightly upto a thickness of  $\frac{1}{4}$ th of an inch.
6. Cut as many shapes as possible from the rolled dough using a fluted biscuit cutter.
7. With a metal palette knife, transfer the cut biscuits into a greased baking tray (Grease the tray lightly with any fat).
8. Bake at  $160^{\circ}$  C for about 10-12 minutes.
9. Once they attain golden brown colour remove them and cool on a cooling rack.

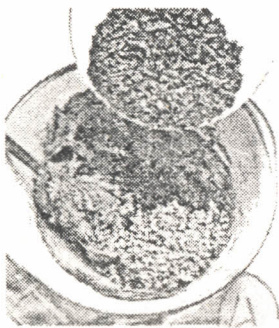


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2

3a

3b



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5



6



## 2.6 BISCUITS MADE WITH EGG WHITE MIXTURES

Biscuits made from egg white mixtures are light in texture, e.g. Macaroons. When egg whites are lightly beaten it becomes a loose



foam which can be used to bind dry ingredients. Nuts are often used as the basis of such mixtures, replacing the flour that provides the body of most biscuit dough. A blend of nuts and sugar, moistened with sufficient egg white to form a batter, will produce crisp light macaroons. These biscuits have a deliciously chewy texture.

### Points to consider

1. It is important to separate the egg white meticulously from the yolk so that no trace of yolk is left in the white. Egg yolk contains fat which prevents proper rising of egg white.
2. For the same reason, use scrupulously clean utensils without a trace of grease.
3. Nuts, if used, should be finely ground to achieve a smooth, even mixture.

### PEA NUT MACAROONS

#### *The Ingredients :*

- |                                      |   |              |
|--------------------------------------|---|--------------|
| 1. Egg white                         | — | of 2 eggs    |
| 2. Grain sugar                       | — | 90 g         |
| 3. Husked and finely chopped peanuts | — | 90g          |
| 4. Vanilla essence                   | — | 5 to 6 drops |
| 5. Salt                              | — | 1 pinch      |

#### *Method:*

- (1) Beat the egg white with a pinch of salt, in a clean copper vessel.
- (2) Keep on adding sugar little at a time during the beating process till all the sugar is utilised. Also add vanilla essence during beating.
- (3) Slowly fold in the chopped peanuts with a palette knife, so that the peanuts mix evenly into the mixture without sinking the egg white.
- (4) Pipe out the mixture with a piping bag and a star nozzle on a greased baking tray. The piped mixture should be the size of a tea spoon.
- (5) Bake at 140°C till the macaroons attain golden brown colour. Approximate time required is 15 to 20 minutes.

*Note:-* Desicated coconut can be used instead of peanuts to get coconut macaroons.

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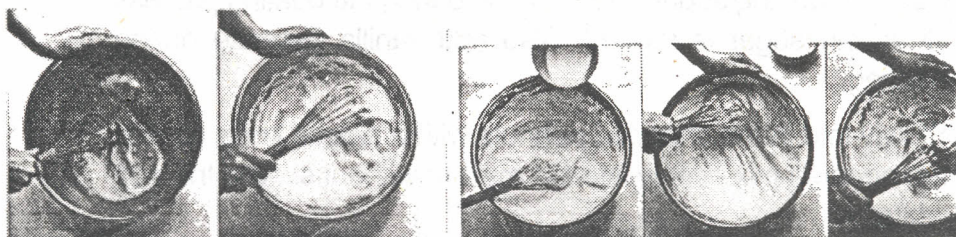
**INTEXT QUESTION 2.2**

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1. Give one line answers
    - i) What is creaming?
    - ii) How would you rectify a curdled mixture?
    - iii) Does curdling of mixture affect biscuit quality?
  2. State true or false.
    - i) Presence of fat on eggwhites hinders rising while whisking.
    - ii) Biscuits made from egg white mixtures are short in texture.
    - iii) Nuts, when added to a biscuit mixture, are generally ground well.
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**2.7. BISCUITS MADE FROM WHISKED EGG DOUGH**

We made the biscuits from egg white mixtures by using only the whites from the eggs, sugar and nuts, whereas whisked egg dough biscuits contain whole eggs, sugar and flour. Fats are optional. The quantity of flour to be added varies from recipe to recipe. By lowering the amount of flour, you can make light biscuits that rise during baking while recipes requiring a higher proportion of flour give comparatively harder biscuits. Flavourings like lemon or orange rind, aniseeds, flavoured liqueur or spices like cinnamon can be added to the dough.



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2



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Biscuits made from this dough have a slightly risen surface due to the expansion of entrapped air in the dough while baking. So they appear slightly dome shaped. This domed surface is a characteristic feature of these biscuits.

### ORANGE BISCUITS

*Ingredients:*

Grated orange rind	—	of 1 Orange
Castor Sugar	—	120g
Eggs	—	2
Egg Yolks	—	of 2 eggs
Olive oil	—	4 Table spoons
Rum	—	4 Table spoons
Flour	—	250g

*The method :*

1. Beat the sugar, eggs, egg yolks and orange rind in a clean bowl till light and thick.
2. Continue mixing, adding the oil, rum and flour to make a fairly light dough.
3. Dust your marble table top with little flour and roll out the dough upto the thickness of ¼".
4. Cut the dough with round or fancy shaped biscuit cutters.
5. Put the biscuits on a greased baking tray and bake in a preheated oven at 180°C for 2 minutes, till they begin to brown.

### 2.8 BISCUITS FROM SYRUP AND HONEY DOUGH

Syrups are thick, sweet liquids like honey, treacle and molases. We have discussed these syrups in our first chapter on Bakery Ingredients or raw materials. These syrups provide extra sweetness, a warm brown colour and a distinctive flavour to the biscuits. In these doughs we can also use brown sugar and certain spices like ginger, nutmeg, cinnamon, cardamom etc. to get richer biscuits.

A little bicarbonate of soda is sifted along with the flour. It produces bubbles of carbondioxide and raises the dough, thus lightening the texture of biscuits.

### TIPS FOR MAKING BETTER BISCUITS

1. For best results, buy the spices whole, store them in air tight containers and grind the required quantities whenever needed.

This ensures better flavour of the spices.

2. If the syrup is too thick and it becomes difficult to blend in the flour, warm it slightly. You can also add butter at this stage to get a thinner consistency.
3. Always sift flour, soda bicarbonate and dry powdered spices together for even mixing.

### CHOCOLATE COOKIES

#### *Ingredients :*

Bitter chocolate, grated	—	140g
Molasses	—	250ml
Soft brown sugar	—	500g
Softened butter	—	250g
Soda-bi-carbonate	—	1 teaspoon
Flour	—	350g

#### *The Method :*

1. Mix all ingredients together to make a stiff batter, using just enough flour to roll out the mixture.
2. Roll out the mixture on a dusted marble top upto a thickness of  $\frac{1}{4}$ ".
3. Cut with a biscuit cutter, about 3 cm in diameter.
4. Place grease proof paper on a baking try and bake the biscuits on the paper in a preheated oven at 200°C for about 12 minutes.
5. When baked and cooled, store in an air tight container.

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### INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.3

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1. Name a few syrups used in biscuit making.
  2. Why are syrups used while making biscuits?
  3. Name some flavouring agents and spices used in biscuits.
  4. Fill in the blanks:
    - i) Biscuit are an important \_\_\_\_\_ item.
    - ii) We can classify biscuits on the basis of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
    - iii) Too much handling of short crust dough results in fat becoming \_\_\_\_\_.
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- iv) Creaming is beating together of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ so that air is enforced into the mixture.
- v) Macaroons have a \_\_\_\_\_ texture
- vi) For proper whisking of eggwhites it is important to seperate \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_.

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**ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS**

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2.1 1.F 2.T 3.T 4.F

- 2.2 (1) i) The process of beating together sugar and butter so that it is aerated.  
ii) Add flour to bind the mixture.  
iii) No.

(2) (i) T (ii) T (iii) T

- 2.3 1. Honey, treacle, molasses  
2. For extra sweetness, warm brown colour, distinctive flavour.  
3. Ginger, nutmeg, cinnamon, cardamom, etc.  
4. (i) snack  
(ii) raw material, method  
(iii) oily  
(iv) fat, sugar  
(v) light  
(vi) white, yolk
-