

English Muffins
"Muffins," by Elizabeth Alston
Clarkson N. Potter, Inc./Publishers ©1985

Ingredients

1 teaspoon granulated sugar
1 cup warm water (105° to 115°F), divided ¼ cup and ¾ cup
1 envelope (1 tablespoon) active dry yeast
2 cups buttermilk
4 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking soda
Vegetable oil, for griddle
Melted unsalted butter, for muffin rings

Preparation

Fit electric mixer with dough hook or paddle. Put sugar and ¼ cup of the water in mixer bowl; sprinkle with yeast. Mix for a few seconds. Let stand a few minutes until yeast is foamy.

Heat buttermilk until it is barely warm to the touch; it will probably curdle, but do not worry. When warm, remove from heat.

Measure flour; sprinkle over yeast. Add salt. Pour buttermilk over flour. Mix on low speed just to combine. Then beat 3 minutes on medium speed. Batter will be sticky and elastic.

Remove bowl from machine; cover with plastic wrap and let rise 1 hour in a warm place (70° to 80° F), until bubbly and doubled in volume.

Dissolve baking soda in remaining ¾ cup warm water. Add to batter. Mix, then beat 1 minute. Cover bowl and let rise 30 minutes longer.

Heat electric skillet (for best results) to about 260°F; or heat one or more iron skillets or griddles over moderately low heat. Brush heated skillet or griddle lightly with oil and place buttered 3-inch muffin rings (or clean tuna cans, open at both ends) on it. Using a buttered ¼ cup measure, scoop ¼ cup of the batter into each muffin ring, spreading with fingers until it touches sides of rings.

Cook muffins 7 to 10 minutes—they will rise to about ¾ inch, and bubbles will appear on the surface and break; raise or lower heat as necessary so muffins cook slowly and evenly and do not get too dark on the bottom. When muffins are golden brown on the bottom and almost dry on the top, remove the rings with tongs and turn the muffins over. Cook 7 to 10 minutes longer until the second side is browned.

Cool muffins at least 15 minutes on a wire rack. Split open with fork and toast cut sides under a broiler.

Note: if you do not have a mixer with a paddle or dough hook, after stirring in the flour, beat mixture with a wooden spoon for about 3 minutes. After dough has risen, beat about 1 minute more.