

Afternoon High Tea

Pumpkin Scones

Yields 12

Ingredients

2 3/4 cups All-Purpose Flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
3/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1/2 cup cold butter
1 cup to 2 cups minced crystallized ginger, cinnamon chips, or chocolate chips
2/3 cup canned pumpkin
2 large eggs
coarse white sparkling sugar, for topping

Directions

In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the flour, sugar, baking powder, salt, and spices. Work in the butter just until the mixture is unevenly crumbly; it's OK for some larger chunks of butter to remain unincorporated. Stir in the ginger and/or chips, if you're using them.

In a separate mixing bowl, whisk together the pumpkin and eggs till smooth. Add the pumpkin/egg to the dry ingredients and stir until all is moistened and holds together. Line a baking sheet with parchment; Sprinkle a bit of flour atop the parchment or pan. Scrape the dough onto the floured parchment or pan, and divide it in half. Round each half into a 5" circle (if you haven't incorporated any add-ins); or a 6" circle (if you've added 2 cups of fruit, nuts, etc.). The circles should be about 3/4" thick. Brush each circle with milk, and sprinkle with coarse white sparkling sugar or cinnamon sugar, if desired. Using a knife or bench knife that you've run under cold water, slice each circle into 6 wedges. Carefully pull the wedges away from the center to separate them just a bit; there should be about 1/2" space between them, at their outer edges. For best texture and highest rise, place the pan of scones in the freezer for 30 minutes, uncovered. While the scones are chilling, preheat the oven to 425°F. Bake the scones for 22 to 25 minutes, or until they're golden brown and a toothpick inserted into the center of one comes out clean, with no wet crumbs. If you pull one of the scones away from the others, the edges should look baked through, not wet or doughy. Remove the scones from the oven, and serve warm. Wrap any leftovers airtight, and store at room temperature. Reheat very briefly in the microwave, if desired.

Tips

Wondering what to do with the rest of the canned pumpkin? Scoop onto plastic wrap or into a small container, and freeze. It'll be ready and waiting next time you want to make these scones. If you're really serious about using your ingredients most effectively, use a scant 2/3 cup pumpkin (a scant 5 1/4 ounces), rather than the full 2/3 cup called for. You'll find a typical 15 1/2-ounce can of pumpkin will then be enough for three batches of scones.

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Mock Devonshire Cream

Makes 1 1/2 cups

Ingredients

1/2 cup whipping cream
2 tablespoons confectioner's sugar
1/2 cup sour cream

Method

In a chilled bowl beat cream until medium-stiff peaks form, adding sugar during last few minutes of beating. Fold in sour cream and blend.

**Clotted cream is not readily duplicated in the United States. This recipe comes close; serve with scones and jam or fresh fruit.*

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Lemon Curd Trifle

Ingredients

6 large egg yolks
1 cup sugar
4 lemons, zested and juiced
1/2 cup unsalted butter, cut in chunks

Method

Bring a pot of water to a simmer over medium-low heat. Combine the egg yolks, sugar, lemon juice, and zest in a metal or glass heat-resistant bowl and whisk until smooth. Set the bowl over the simmering water, without letting the bottom touch, and continue to whisk. Keep working-out that arm and whisk it vigorously for a good 10 minutes, until the curd has doubled in volume and is very thick and yellow. Don't let it boil. Remove the bowl from heat and whisk in the butter, a couple of chunks at a time, until melted. Refrigerate until the custard is cold and firm.