



English Tea Scones with Fresh Fruit Compote

By Chris Duke

Anna's Gourmet Goodies



As I look out my window, watching the rain slowly soak into the ground, I am reminded that even in the South, there are times when everything is lush and green. During my travels through the English countryside some years ago, near continuous damp weather is the norm and helps produce those famed beautiful gardens of Great Britain.

Thinking back on my adventures in and around London inspired this recipe for English scones to go along with a cup of

tea. The tradition of afternoon tea dates back to the late 1700's when Anna, the Duchess of Bedford needed a little something to tide her over between a light lunch and a late dinner. She invited friends over for a cup of tea and snacks around 5 p.m. in the afternoon. Others quickly copied the practice and the tradition of afternoon tea was born.

Although it is more traditional to serve scones with jam or butter, the compote transforms this simple quick bread into a deliciously light and appealing dessert that works with tea or as the finale to a meal. The term compote refers to virtually any mixture of fresh fruit, cooked with syrup, and some type of zest. In this case, I've chosen to add a little Grand Marnier to give it an orange flavor, but you can substitute a grated orange or lemon peel if you like.

English Tea Scones

- 2 cups all purpose flour
- 2 tbsp cane sugar
- 2 tbsp brown sugar
- 1 tbsp baking powder
- 1 tsp salt
- 5 tbsp butter - cold
- 1 egg
- ¼ cup milk
- 1 tbsp sour cream
- 1 egg white

Fruit compote

½ pint fresh raspberries
½ pint fresh blueberries
1 pear
½ cup cane sugar
1 tbsp butter
1 shot Grand Marnier

Sour Cream Topping

½ cup sour cream
1 tbsp cane sugar
¼ tsp vanilla

Pre-heat the oven to 425 degrees. Sift together the dry ingredients for the scones into a large bowl. Using a knife, cut the butter into small chunks. While you can use a pastry cutter or a fork to cut the butter into the flour mixture, I like to use my fingers and hands when making scones. Press the butter and the flour together with your fingers and work the mixture until the butter chunks disappear and it has the texture of a coarse meal. Beat the egg slightly and add to the mixture along with the milk and the sour cream. Use a fork to blend until the mixture is moist and a dough forms.

Sprinkle with flour, scrape down the edges, and gently roll the dough over the bottom of the pan until a ball forms. Continue to sprinkle with flour if necessary to keep the dough from sticking, but don't overwork it at this point. Divide the dough in half, and knead on a floured surface about 10 times. Form into a ball, and press down flat to make a circle about 7" in diameter.

Whisk the egg white with about a teaspoon of water until it begins to froth and brush over the top of the dough. Cut like a pie into 8 equal sections and place each piece on top of a parchment paper lined baking pan or non-stick pan if you have one. Repeat the process with the other half of the dough.

Bake for approximately 13 minutes, or until the tops are golden brown.

Fruit compote

Wash the raspberries and the blueberries and drain thoroughly. Peel the pear and cut into quarters. Using a knife, remove the core from top to bottom. Slice each section into ¼" strips and then cut into ¼" chunks.

In a saucepan, melt the butter and add ½ of the raspberries. Add the sugar and stir, crushing the raspberries. Cook over medium heat for approximately 5 minutes. The mixture should come to a slight boil and begin to reduce and thicken.

When the sauce has thickened, add the blueberries, stir and cook for an additional 2 minutes. Add the pears and the Grand Marnier and reduce for an additional 3 minutes. If

you don't have any Grand Marnier, or simply don't like to cook with alcohol, you can substitute ½ teaspoon of grated orange peel.

Remove from the heat and cool for 10 minutes.

Sour cream topping

Mix the sour cream, sugar and vanilla together in a bowl.

To serve, cut a scone in half and place it on a dessert plate. Spoon some of the compote on the lower half. Replace the top half of the scone, spoon some more compote over the top, and cap it off with a dollop of the sour cream mixture. Sprinkle with a little powdered sugar and add a sprig of mint to complete the presentation.

So invite a few friends over, pour yourselves a nice cup of tea, relax and enjoy this tradition started by our British neighbors.

Bon Appetit!