

Mixed Berry Scones

This dish would be a favorite of Countess Cora's to offer to her younger guests with their tea. While visitors such as the Dowager Countess might prefer less flavorful options, these scones would give a needed variety—not to mention flavor—to a meal that most of Cora's guests would have experienced on a daily basis.

Makes 10–12 Scones

3 cups all-purpose flour
½ cup white sugar
¼ cup turbinado sugar
½ teaspoon baking soda
2 ½ teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon kosher salt
¾ cup (1 ½ sticks) unsalted butter, cut into ¼- to ½-inch pieces
½ cup fresh blueberries
½ cup fresh blackberries
½ cup fresh raspberries
½ cup hulled and quartered fresh strawberries
1 ¼ cups buttermilk
1 ½ teaspoons vanilla extract
½ cup heavy cream (for brushing)
½ cup sugar (for sprinkling)

1. Preheat oven to 375. Lightly oil a baking sheet.
2. In a large bowl and using a wooden spoon, mix together the flour, both sugars, baking soda, baking powder, and salt.
3. Using your bare hands, work the butter into the flour mixture until it has the consistency of bread crumbs. Add berries, mixing well, so that the berries are evenly distributed.
4. In a small bowl, mix together the buttermilk and vanilla extract with a fork.
5. Once again using your hands, dig a well in the center of the dry mixture and pour the buttermilk mixture into the well. Still using your hands, combine the ingredients until the entire mixture appears wet. Do not overknead.
6. Turn the mixture onto a lightly floured surface. Gently pat down the dough to make a disk about 1.–2 inches thick. Using a biscuit cutter (or a knife if you don't have a biscuit cutter), cut out as many scones as possible and lay them on the baking sheet. Gather together the remaining dough to cut out more scones . . . but once again, don't knead the dough too much.
7. Liberally brush heavy cream over the top of each scone, then sprinkle them with sugar. Bake the scones for 10–12 minutes or until they are lightly browned.

Etiquette Lessons

Contrary to popular belief, a lady should never hold her tea cup with her pinkie finger extended. Instead, a woman should place her index finger into the handle of the cup up to the knuckle while placing her thumb on the top of the handle to secure the cup. The bottom of the handle should then rest on her middle finger. The third and fourth fingers should curve back toward the wrist.

Clotted Cream

All British chefs worth their salt know how to make this classic accompaniment for scones, crepes, and even toast. Clotted cream is an integral part to cream tea, where tea is served with clotted cream, jam, and scones. Most teas offered by the ladies of Downton Abbey are cream teas, and thus Mrs. Patmore would be quite skilled at making—and storing—clotted cream.

Yields 4 Cups

4 cups heavy whipping cream

1. Preheat oven to 180.
2. Pour the cream into an oven-safe pot or dutch oven. The cream should come up to about 3 inches. Cover the pot, then place in the oven for at least 6 hours. The cream will be done when there is a thick yellowish skin on top.
3. Let the cream cool at room temperature, then put the pot in the refrigerator for 8–12 hours. Remove clotted cream from the top of the pot and serve cold.

Times Gone By

Even though menus were extravagant at Downton Abbey, Mrs. Patmore still wouldn't want to waste a thing. She'd likely save the cream that remained in the pot once the clotted cream was scooped out and use it in another recipe for either the aristocrats or the staff.