



Cacio e Pepe Biscuits

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Fresh homemade biscuits make my day, or any meal that much better! These “Cacio e Pepe” biscuits were inspired by one of my favorite Italian pasta sauces made from cheese—cacio is the roman dialect word for cheese—and black pepper—pepe. I use my family biscuit recipe as the base to carry the flavor and added a touch of Gruyere cheese to add deep toasty caramelized cheese notes.

In the South, biscuits have been traditionally made with either lard or Crisco. In my family, we use lard for a super tender biscuit that leans savory or Crisco and butter for flavor and flakiness. When making cheese biscuits, I almost always use lard. In the case of these “Cacio e Pepe” biscuits, the lard really makes a difference in the crisp tops and tender crumb that “eats” somewhere between a biscuit and a cheese straw.

Makes 10-12 Biscuits

Ingredients:

- ½ cup shredded Pecorino-Romano or a mix of Parmesan and Pecorino
- 1/3 generous cup sliced and chopped Gruyere cheese
- 1 scant tablespoon [Coarse-Grind Black Pepper](#)
- 2-3 generous tablespoons of full-fat mayonnaise
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon cream of tartar
- ¼ teaspoon kosher or sea salt
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ cup chilled Lard (or half Crisco shortening and half butter) 1 stick of butter = ½ cup
- 1/3-½ cup buttermilk
- ½ stick butter (1/4 cup) melted

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 425°F.
2. In a small bowl, mix together both cheeses, pepper and mayonnaise until you have a dry-ish spread. You don't want it to be oozing mayo, use only enough to bind everything together. Set aside and let the cheese and pepper meld and absorb the moisture while you get the biscuit dough together.
3. In a large bowl, sift or whisk together the flour, cream of tartar, salt and baking powder.
4. Using a Blending Fork, pastry blender or two knives, cut the lard or shortening/butter into the flour until mixture resembles coarse crumbs.



5. Add the reserved cheese spread and mix well to completely combine. You want the mixture to be evenly studded with the cheese and pepper.
6. Add just enough buttermilk to the dough to moisten the flour mixture—I start with 1/3 cup. Using a fork, stir until well moistened and the dough comes together in a bowl. If you add too much buttermilk, and your dough is really sticky, let it sit 5-10 minutes and turn it out on a floured work surface. Gently knead a couple of times to incorporate more flour in the dough. too Pat into a disc shape but don't over mix. Place in the freezer for 15 minutes to chill.
7. To Roll Biscuits: Turn dough out on a floured surface. Gently roll dough in a circle until it is a little less than ½ - inch thick. Brush liberally with the melted butter and fold over to cover butter. Pinch the edges to seal and brush the surface with more butter. Fold the dough over on itself and seal again. Pat into a disc and place back in the freezer for 10 minutes.
8. Remove from freezer and gently roll out in a 10 inch circle.
9. Cut the dough with a biscuit cutter or round cookie cutter (2 ½ -3 inches in diameter) as close together as possible to avoid wasting the dough. You can gather the scraps and gently re-roll them until you get 10-12 biscuits total.
10. Place biscuits on parchment-lined sheet pan , 1-inch apart. Brush tops with melted butter and bake for 10-15 minutes—based on size—or until golden. Remove from oven and brush tops again with the butter.
11. Serve immediately.

Notes:

Drop Biscuit Variation:

The dough should be wetter than the rolled biscuit dough. Make sure it is a little wet and sticky but easy to scoop with a spoon and drop on an ungreased sheet pan or sheet pan fitted with a piece of parchment paper. If it is too dry, add a bit more buttermilk. Brush the tops with butter before and after baking. I always use parchment because it makes the clean-up easier. Bake for 10-15 minutes—based on size—or until golden brown on the bottom and the top of the biscuit.