



On the Menu – The Union Pacific Railroad

Orange Tea Biscuits

Rich tea biscuits are plain biscuits lightly sweetened with fresh oranges

2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon salt
3 teaspoons baking powder
1 to 2 Tablespoons finely grated orange zest
1/4 cup white vegetable shortening (Crisco)
3/4 cup cold milk or almond milk
1-1/2 to 2 Tablespoons granulated sugar
1/2 Tablespoon grated orange zest
1 Tablespoon melted butter

- Line a baking sheet with parchment paper; preheat oven to 400 degrees F.
- In a mixing bowl, combine flour, salt, and baking powder; add orange zest; mix thoroughly.
- Using a pastry blend or (your hands) cut the shortening into the flour mixture thoroughly forming small crumbs.

- Stir in milk, using a spoon, so dough isn't too hard from excessive handling while mixing.
- On a lightly floured pastry board, roll dough to ½ inch thickness; cut with a 2-inch biscuit cutter.
- Place on parchment lined baking sheet, leaving 2-inch space between biscuits.
- In a small bowl, mix granulated sugar and orange zest, blending ingredients together.
- Brush the top of biscuits with melted butter; sprinkle with orange sugar.
- Bake in preheated 400-degree F. oven for about 20 to 22 minutes or golden brown. Serve warm: Yield: about 12 biscuits

Cook's Note: The original recipe used lard, milk, and 2 Tablespoons orange zest in the dough and made about 14 biscuits.

For the Original Recipe

See: *Dining by Rail*, James D. Porterfield, New York, St. Martin's Griffin, 1993, p. 288.

About the Recipe: Tea biscuits served during this time period were mostly plain, bland biscuits and only slightly sweetened. This biscuit has a crisp crust and soft crumb inside and is lightly flavored with fresh orange zest and a touch of sugar. It can be served with breakfast or with a simple supper. It was a train specialty.

The Union Pacific Railroad:

In 1889, they announced that they would have dining cars. The competition for passengers influenced them to start serving first class travelers with additional services like dining cars, which provided food that was locally grown and seasonal treats. Adding fresh oranges to their biscuits gave them a sweet touch and creative edge.