

Biscuits and Gravy: a Southern Comfort

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When asked to bring something for a potluck at the end of the ICIEA Japanese class, my first instinct was to share something specific to my region of America. I am from Tennessee, a part of the Southern region known as just “the South.” My favorite part of waking up on a Sunday as a kid was that smell of freshly baked biscuits and the sound of sausage popping in the skillet. I’m not a morning person, but it was worth waking up for especially since it was normal to take a nap after such a heavy meal. (Becoming sleepy and taking a nap after a meal is called going into a food coma. And I was the food coma queen!) The typical Southern breakfast is biscuits and gravy, fried or scrambled eggs that are cooked in butter rather than oil, and seasonal fruit. The biscuits (and gravy provided by Allie Lewis, another Tennessee native) were a hit at the potluck, so they’re sure to be gobbled up in your home as well!

Biscuit recipe: 6-8 biscuits

Ingredients:

2 cups flour

1/4 cup shortening or cold butter

2/3 cup milk (might not use all of it)

Directions:

1. Grease your baking sheet
2. Put flour in large bowl.
3. Cut shortening into flour with dull knife until small crumbs form. (For flakier biscuits, don’t mix a lot.)
4. Little by little, add the milk and stir with fork until it becomes a moist, sticky dough.
5. Put a small amount of flour into the palm of one hand (to prevent sticking) and pick up desired amount of dough with other hand.
6. Mold into a ball then pat to flatten just a little. (The trick to making good biscuits is to not handle the dough too much.)
7. Bake for 8-10 minutes at 245 degrees Celsius. (For softer biscuits, place the biscuits close together)
8. Cut open and add desired topping (I recommend either gravy, jam and butter, or sausage and jam.)



Gravy recipe:

Ingredients:

12 ounces raw sausage (If you can’t find raw sausage, you can use ground beef or pork and add your choice of spices. If you use pre-cooked sausage, just chop it up into small pieces and use more butter. The point of this meal is to just use what you have available.)

3 tablespoons butter

1/4 cup flour

3 cups milk

Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Cook sausage in large, deep skillet, breaking it up into small pieces.
2. Remove sausage, leaving the drippings in the pan.
3. Stir in the butter until melted.
4. Add flour, and stir until smooth. Reduce heat to medium, and cook until light brown.
5. Gradually whisk in milk, and cook until thickened.
6. Season with salt and pepper, and stir in cooked sausage.
7. Reduce heat, and simmer for 12 to 15 minutes. (If gravy becomes too thick, stir in a little more milk.)

After the American Revolutionary War (1775-1783), the South became deprived of resources, so their meals became cheaper. They used what little they had to make a delicious meal: biscuits and gravy. If you look at the ingredients lists, you’ll notice they are both essentially made of the same things. Despite the low cost, it was filling enough to prepare for a long, hard day of working in the fields. Most Southerners no longer work on farms and don’t need a meal with such a high caloric intake; however, you can still find biscuits and gravy in restaurants and homes all across the South. And everyone you meet will swear their family recipe is the best. The most popular Southern food chain restaurant is Cracker Barrel, which serves a side of biscuits with your meal: breakfast, lunch, or dinner. This has even inspired McDonald’s and other large chains to serve biscuits on their breakfast menu. If you ever get the chance to visit America, please come on down to the South and fill up on some good ol’ home cookin’. You’ll surely enjoy our famous “southern hospitality,” and become like family with the grannies and papaws sending you off with “y’all come back now, ya hear?”