

MARGARET
FULTON'S
Baking Classics





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CONTENTS



title page

introduction

recipe notes, conversions & equipment



BISCUITS

BROWNIES & SLICES

MUFFINS, SCONES, SHORTCAKES & QUICKBREADS

CAKES

SMALL CAKES & BUNS

PASTRIES & TARTS



glossary

acknowledgements

copyright page

INTRODUCTION



IT IS SEVEN o'clock on Sunday morning and my niece is downstairs rustling up some trays of her special date slice, to take to friends. As the reassuring fragrance wafts into my bedroom, I love knowing that someone is in the kitchen and something is baking in the oven. It takes me straight back to my childhood and my mother, for whom home baking played a vital role in everyday life.

One of my fondest memories growing up was seeing my mother sitting in the kitchen with a mixing bowl on her lap, making her shortbread. The whole thing would be done, literally, by hand. One hand was kept clean, holding the bowl, while the other would beat in the butter, sugar and flour until it all got very buttery. She made very good shortbread and I've continued that tradition, as has my daughter Suzanne.

Rich cakes, melt-in-the-mouth biscuits, light-as-air sponges and fluffy scones have held pride of place in the Australian kitchen since pioneering days. And over the years, as we've become more cosmopolitan and sophisticated, the range of recipes has extended to include not only the established fare but also a varied international contribution as well. The inspiration for many of the recipes in this book came from my travels around the world.

As Suzanne (who has been working with me on this book) and I know, many people around the world share our love of baking little specialties for family and friends. In Holland, spicy speculaas are a favourite biscuit, especially at Christmas, while every self-respecting Scot takes pride in making shortbread. Throughout Scandinavia, Germany and Austria, spiced biscuits are made and enjoyed. In Germany two Stollens are baked, one to keep and one to give away. The French are renowned for their pastries, madeleines, fruit tarts and pithiviers. From Italy we get sometimes chewy, sometimes crisp specialties such as, siena cake and amaretti. We love these treats in our family, so it is natural that these traditions have inspired some of the recipes in this book.

Over the years, I've received letters from all over the world enquiring about my recipes. I once got a letter from a group of men on expedition in Antarctica, wanting a crumpet recipe. I wrote to them for a long time afterwards and they sent photos of the crumpets they made. I still get so many letters about many of my baking recipes. It's wonderful to know these recipes get passed down in families and continue to live on.

Home-baked goods may not always resemble those professional offerings with their perfect edges and level tops, but usually this is a good thing. For me, something that looks handcrafted, a little rustic even, has far more allure than something that comes from a factory. And the bonus is, you've used real ingredients, so you know what you're eating.

Some people avoid baking because they think special skills are needed. There's nothing mysterious about baking. The most important thing to remember is to follow the instructions. You've got to learn the rules. If you don't learn the rules you'll get into trouble. And you need to practise, just keep at it. I love teaching people how to make things like pastry, as it's such a wonderful thing to know. Pastry is the base of all the good things in life!

For me, the sheer pleasure of baking is in the act of slowing down for long enough to roll up your sleeves to make something for your friends and family – it's in the giving and sharing. Suzanne and I invite you to share our love of baking through these recipes. Enjoy!

Margaret Fulton

RECIPE NOTES



Standard Australian metric weights and measures have been used in this book. To make these recipes you need a few inexpensive pieces of equipment obtainable at most supermarkets.

These are:

- A standard graduated 250 ml fluid measuring jug for measuring liquids.
- A set of four graduated metric measuring cups comprising 1 cup (250 ml), $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (125 ml), $\frac{1}{3}$ cup (approximately 80 ml) and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (60 ml) – used to measure dry ingredients.
- A set of standard measuring spoons comprising 1 tablespoon (20 ml), 1 teaspoon (5 ml), $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon (2.5 ml) and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon (1.25 ml).
- A small set of scales.
- A measuring tape or ruler that gives both metric and imperial measurements.

Note North American and British measuring cups and spoons vary from Australian standards. Follow one set of measures; do not mix them.

how to measure correctly

Dry ingredients

When measuring dry ingredients (flour, sugar, etc.) heap the cup or spoon, then level off the excess with a knife or spatula. For flour, pour or spoon the flour into the cup, rather than sweeping the cup into the packet (this method can compact the flour, giving you a heavier cup of flour than is standard).

Liquid ingredients

The metric measuring jug shows 1 cup, $\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{2}{3}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{8}$ cup measures and their metric equivalents. The litre jug has a similar breakdown from 1 litre to $\frac{1}{4}$ litre and also shows graduations in millilitres (1000 ml = 4 cups = 1 litre).

general notes

- All cup and spoon measures are level.
- The recipes in this book have been made with the 250 ml cup.
- 55–60 g eggs have been used unless otherwise specified.
- Can, pack and bottle sizes are given in metric. Some cans and packs may vary a little from exact sizes given according to the different brands available. It is best to use the nearest size.

abbreviations

gram g

kilogram kg
centimetre cm
millimetre mm
millilitre ml

oven temperature guide

Oven temperatures are expressed in degrees Celsius (°C). If using a fan-forced oven, as a guide, drop the temperature by 20°C. Oven temperatures vary according to make; therefore, refer to the instruction book that accompanies your oven. All ovens should be preheated to the specified temperature, particularly for cakes, biscuits and pastry recipes.

Know your oven; a new oven may take some getting used to. Most ovens have hotter or cooler spots, and some may run, overall, hotter or cooler than the temperature stated on the thermostat. With practice, you will soon become familiar with the idiosyncracies of your oven and will be able to adjust temperatures and times accordingly.

CONVERSIONS



These conversions are approximate. If using a recipe that gives both cups and weights, stick with one system or the other.

weight

METRIC	IMPERIAL
10–15 g	½ oz
20 g	¾ oz
30 g	1 oz
40 g	1½ oz
50–60 g	2 oz
75 g	2½ oz
80 g	3 oz
100 g	3½ oz
125 g	4 oz
150 g	5 oz
175 g	6 oz
200 g	7 oz
225 g	8 oz
250 g	9 oz
275 g	10 oz
300 g	10½ oz
350 g	12 oz
400 g	14 oz
450 g	1 lb
500 g	1 lb 2 oz
600 g	1 lb 5 oz
650 g	1 lb 7 oz
750 g	1 lb 10 oz
900 g	2 lb
1 kg	2 lb 3 oz

volume

METRIC	IMPERIAL
---------------	-----------------

50–60 ml	2 fl oz
75 ml	2½ fl oz
100 ml	3½ fl oz
120 ml	4 fl oz
150 ml	5 fl oz
170 ml	6 fl oz
200 ml	7 fl oz
225 ml	8 fl oz
250 ml	8½ fl oz
300 ml	10 fl oz
400 ml	13 fl oz
500 ml	17 fl oz
600 ml	20 fl oz
750 ml	25 fl oz
1 litre	34 fl oz

length

METRIC	IMPERIAL
---------------	-----------------

5 mm	¼ inch
1 cm	½ inch
2 cm	¾ inch
2.5 cm	1 inch
5 cm	2 inches
7.5 cm	3 inches
10 cm	4 inches
15 cm	6 inches
20 cm	8 inches
30 cm	12 inches

temperature

°C	°F	GAS
140	275	Gas 1

150
160
170
180
190
200
210
220

300
320
340
350
375
400
410
430

Gas 2
Gas 2-3
Gas 3
Gas 4
Gas 5
Gas 6
Gas 6-7
Gas 7

EQUIPMENT



If you're a novice baker, and starting from scratch, think first about what you want and like to make. Cakes need the right tins; biscuits and pastries need good baking trays, pastry tins and a good rolling pin. I am constantly surprised at the difference in baking results because of the type of tin or tray used.

Go for quality and you will usually be rewarded. Generally, choose aluminium over tin, particularly hard-anodised aluminium if you can find it. Silicon is good but doesn't allow baked goods to brown as well as metal does.

Start with the basics and gradually build up your equipment as your repertoire and your skills expand. It's irritating to have to struggle to find what you need among a clutter of tins, racks, trays, whisks and electrical appliances, so get organised before you start.



biscuits

ROUND BISCUIT CUTTERS

ALUMINIUM BAKING TRAYS, preferably double-sided. Choose two the same size so you can double them if you want to help protect delicate items from overbrowning.

brownies and slices

LAMINGTON TIN, 30 cm x 20 cm

muffins

MUFFIN TINS A 12-hole, ½-cup, tin should be first on the list, followed by a 24-hole, 1–2 tablespoon, mini muffin tin, which is wonderful for baking tiny muffins or cakes.

cakes

AN ELECTRIC STAND MIXER with a paddle beater and a whisk; is very handy but not cheap, so if you can't afford one, a hand-held electric mixer is an economical and versatile substitute.

SILICON SPATULAS are useful for scraping the sides of bowls cleanly and for smoothing the tops of mixtures in the tin.

UNCOATED ALUMINIUM CAKE TINS: Start with a 20 cm and 22 cm round cake tin; a deep 19 cm and 23 cm square cake tin; and a 21 cm x 14 cm loaf tin. A 20 cm ring tin is also very useful, particularly for cake batters that are likely to sink in the centre, as they allow for more even cooking. It's a bonus to have a 23 cm springform tin. Nonstick coatings are good when the tins are new but are easily

scratched, so need careful looking after. Aluminium is light and durable and an excellent conductor of heat, which aids even baking.

SMALL METAL SPATULAS are useful for releasing cakes from tins and for spreading icings and fillings.

COOLING RACKS are essential for freshly baked cakes and pastries. If the steamy moisture can't escape it will condense inside the cake or dough, making it heavy. Choose one or two made of good-quality tinned steel.

rolls and roulades

SWISS ROLL TIN, 30 cm x 25 cm

meringues

A COPPER BOWL AND BALLOON WHISK are the very best things for beating egg whites. The copper helps to make a very stable fine-textured foam. Copper bowls are expensive, however, and you'll probably find that a good electric mixer will satisfy your needs. A round-based stainless steel bowl and balloon whisk are a good alternative.

PIPING BAG Choose a large, flexible, tightly woven bag which can be easily washed and dried after use along with a set of plain nozzles, including one with a 1 cm diameter. You might also want one or two rosette nozzles for decorative meringues and cream fillings.

ALUMINIUM BAKING TRAYS (see [biscuits](#))

yeast cooking

BABA, SAVARIN OR KUGELHOPF TINS These are ideal for making yeasted cakes.

BREAD TINS IN VARIOUS SIZES

ALUMINIUM BAKING TRAYS are used when making rolls or round loaves (see [biscuits](#)).

pastries and tarts

A FOOD PROCESSOR is invaluable for making pastry at the drop of a hat.

A HEAVY ROLLING PIN made of a single cylindrical length of close-grained wood with a smooth, silky finish is ideal for rolling out pastry.

A MARBLE SLAB can be expensive and isn't essential but it will help keep the pastry cool while it is being worked.

A LONG METAL SPATULA is useful for releasing pastry from a floured surface.

ALUMINIUM BAKING TRAYS (see [biscuits](#))

PASTRY BRUSHES with soft natural or nylon bristles are best for dusting off excess flour or spreading glazes or melted butter.

general equipment

Other equipment that you will already have in the kitchen and that is used for baking includes:

MEASURING CUPS AND SPOONS (see [how to measure correctly](#))

DIGITAL SCALES

SIFTERS OR SIEVES A large sifter or sieve is essential for sifting flour, and a smaller one is useful for dredging icing sugar or cocoa over finished baked goods.

A NEST OF MIXING BOWLS IN AT LEAST THREE SIZES (SMALL, MEDIUM AND LARGE) Stainless steel, glass or ceramic are better than plastic, which can retain grease, flavours and odours.

SPOONS Wooden spoons do not conduct heat or scratch non-stick surfaces; large metal spoons are used for folding in ingredients.

BAKING PAPER is essential for lining tins; also, it's useful to roll out pastry between two sheets of baking paper for ease of handling.

care of bakeware

Wash bakeware in hot soapy water (do not use abrasive scrubbers on non-stick surfaces) and rinse well. If your oven is still warm after your baking session, put washed and dried bakeware in the oven to dry it completely before putting it away, to prevent rust.



BISCUITS

HINTS & TIPS



THE FIRST BISCUITS were small, flat cakes that were baked twice to make them crisp (the word biscuit means ‘twice cooked’ in French). The term now describes an infinite variety of crunchy, crisp, chewy or brittle baked goods, from plain water biscuits to sweet confections.

types of biscuits

Biscuits can be formed in many ways. The biscuits in this book have been organised according to how they are shaped.

Drop biscuits

These are the easiest of all biscuits to shape, as they are simply dropped from a spoon onto a baking tray. They vary in texture. Some fall easily from the spoon and flatten into wafers when baking. Stiff doughs need a push from your finger or the use of a second spoon to release them. To get drops of uniform size, use a standard measuring spoon of the size noted in the recipe – generally a half-teaspoon, teaspoon or tablespoon. If you want the biscuits thinner, press down on top with the tines of a fork dipped in caster sugar. During very hot weather, put the dough in the refrigerator for 20 minutes before using.

Leave a generous amount of space between each mound of mixture on the baking tray; thinner mixtures in particular may spread quite a lot.

Shaped biscuits

These biscuits require very basic shaping. The mixture is generally scooped up in spoonfuls and then rolled into balls by hand. Once placed on the baking trays, the balls can be flattened slightly with the fingers or the tines of a fork dipped in caster sugar or flour.

Refrigerator biscuits

The dough for these biscuits needs to be rolled into a log, wrapped in plastic wrap and chilled until firm. Slices are then cut off to form biscuits. Refrigerator biscuit dough is good to keep on hand in the fridge or freezer so you can cut off and bake a few slices at short notice. The dough will keep for 2 weeks in the fridge or 2 months in the freezer.

Rolled biscuits

The dough for these biscuits is rolled out, then cut into a variety of shapes, using a knife, pastry cutter or biscuit cutters. When rolling out biscuit dough, roll each stroke in one direction only (rather than using a back and forth motion), turning the pastry with the help of a metal spatula. Ensure that the

dough is of an even thickness so that the biscuits cook in the same amount of time.

Unless the recipe specifies otherwise, the scraps from one rolling can be gathered up, gently pressed together into a pad, then re-rolled and cut.



making biscuits

HAVE THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT You will need at least one (preferably two) baking trays; a flat-bladed metal spatula for lifting cooked biscuits off the trays; and one or two wire racks.

PREVENT BISCUITS FROM STICKING TO TRAYS Line the trays with baking paper, or grease lightly with butter; too much butter can cause the biscuits to spread. Measure accurately, using level cup and spoon measures unless the recipe states otherwise. See [how to measure correctly](#) for more information on measuring.

HAVE BUTTER AT THE RIGHT TEMPERATURE For creamed mixtures, the butter should be at room temperature. This is a slight misnomer, as the temperature of the room depends on the heat of the day. In baking terms, however, 'room temperature' means butter that is soft but still holds its shape. It should not be runny or liquid. Butter straight from the fridge may take an hour to soften adequately, depending on the heat of the room.

PREHEAT THE OVEN The oven needs to be the right temperature when the biscuits go in.

MAKE SURE THE OVEN RACKS ARE CORRECTLY POSITIONED If baking one tray at a time, place the rack in the centre of the oven. If baking two trays, place the oven racks as though dividing the oven into thirds. Air needs to circulate around the trays, so it's better to bake a large quantity of biscuits in several batches than to overcrowd the oven.

TURN THE TRAYS OCCASIONALLY Many ovens have hot spots that result in uneven cooking. To compensate for this, turn the baking trays once or twice. If using more than one baking tray, also swap their positions on the oven racks to prevent uneven browning.

KEEP AN EYE ON BISCUITS WHILE THEY BAKE The cooking time in the recipe is a guide only, as all ovens differ. A few minutes before the end of the specified cooking time, check the biscuits, rotating and swapping the trays if needed. Cooked biscuits will be firm and dry on the top. Lift one biscuit off the tray with a spatula and check the underside to see if it is also cooked. If the biscuits need more cooking, return them to the oven for a further minute or two. Keep checking them frequently; biscuits can burn quickly.

ALLOW BISCUITS TO COOL When first removed from the oven biscuits are very soft and fragile, so leave them on the tray for a few minutes to cool slightly and set. (The exceptions to this rule are biscuits such as brandy snaps, which are sometimes removed when still hot and then shaped around a rolling pin or similar.) Use a flat-bladed metal spatula to transfer the biscuits to wire racks to cool completely. Once they are cool you can ice them or add fillings. Store biscuits in an airtight container; if left on the racks for too long they can absorb moisture from the air and lose some of their crispness, especially on humid days.

ICINGS AND FILLINGS It is best to do so on the day they are to be served, as biscuits may reabsorb moisture from soft icings or fillings if they are stored too long (if the icing is hard, they keep well).

STORE IN AN AIRTIGHT CONTAINER Store each type of biscuit in its own container to prevent flavours from mingling. In particular, keep sweet and savoury biscuits separate.

TO RE-CRISP BISCUITS that have become a little soft, place on baking trays lined with baking paper and bake in a 180°C oven for about 5 minutes. (This can only be done with biscuits that have not been iced or filled.) Transfer to wire racks to cool.

CHERRY WINK COOKIES



MAKES ABOUT 36

1½ cups (225 g) plain flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
a pinch of salt
125 g butter, softened
½ cup (110 g) caster sugar
1½ teaspoons vanilla essence
2 tablespoons honey
1 egg
2 tablespoons milk
2 cups (100 g) cornflakes, lightly crushed
½ cup (120 g) glacé cherries, halved (see [Note](#))

Preheat the oven to 200°C. Grease baking trays or line them with baking paper.

Sift the flour, baking powder and salt. Using an electric mixer, cream the butter with the sugar and vanilla. Add the honey and egg and beat well. Using a large metal spoon or a silicon spatula, fold in the dry ingredients, a little at a time, alternating with milk.

Drop heaped teaspoonfuls of the mixture into lightly crushed cornflakes and toss gently to coat.

Place on the prepared baking trays and gently press a glacé cherry half into the centre of each. Bake the cookies for 10 minutes or until golden. Transfer to wire racks to cool.

Note For a pretty effect, use different colours of glacé cherries. Most glacé cherries are dyed to make them brightly coloured; however, undyed cherries are available. They are a darker, more natural red and are available from larger supermarkets and health food stores.



TOLLHOUSE COOKIES



THIS IS A classic American cookie which remains very popular today. The name comes from the Toll House Inn in Whitman, Massachusetts, which was owned by Ruth Graves Wakefield, who developed the first recipe for chocolate chip cookies in 1930.

MAKES ABOUT 36

1¼ cups (185 g) plain flour
½ teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
½ teaspoon salt
125 g butter, softened
¼ cup (55 g) firmly packed brown sugar
½ cup (110 g) caster sugar
1 egg, beaten
1 teaspoon vanilla essence
100 g choc bits

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Grease baking trays or line them with baking paper.

Sift the flour, bicarbonate of soda and salt together. Using an electric mixer, cream the butter with the sugars until light and fluffy. Add the egg and vanilla and beat well. Stir in the sifted dry ingredients and the choc bits.

Drop teaspoonfuls of the mixture onto the prepared baking trays, spacing them about 5 cm apart. Bake for 10 minutes or until golden. Transfer to wire racks to cool.

Note Use all the one type of choc bits, or a mixture of milk, dark and white.



BRANDY SNAPS



THESE CRISP, LACY rolled wafers are elegant for afternoon tea or to accompany a fruit dessert. They have been made for centuries in Britain, where they were often given as gifts by vendors at medieval fairs. Later, they became an afternoon tea treat, filled with whipped cream. Part of their appeal is the various pretty shapes – tubes, curls or baskets – they can be formed into, and which can then be filled with cream and fruits, or a mousse mixture.

MAKES ABOUT 12

60 g butter
⅓ cup (60 g) lightly packed brown sugar
⅓ cup golden syrup
½ cup (75 g) plain flour
1 teaspoon ground ginger
grated rind of half a lemon

To serve

1 cup (250 ml) cream
1 tablespoon brandy (optional)

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Line two baking trays with baking paper. Grease the round handles of two wooden spoons (the larger the better).

Heat the butter, sugar and golden syrup together in a saucepan until the butter melts. Cool, then add the flour sifted with the ginger. Stir in the lemon rind.

Drop teaspoonfuls of the mixture onto a prepared baking tray, spacing them at least 15 cm apart and allowing only two or three biscuits per tray. Bake one tray at a time for about 10 minutes or until golden brown.

Remove from the oven, allow to set for a few seconds, then ease the biscuits off the tray with a palette knife and wrap loosely around the handle of a wooden spoon, lacy side (the upper side) out. When crisp, remove from spoon.

As soon as they are completely cold, store in an airtight container unless using immediately.

To serve, whip the cream, fold in the brandy and pipe into both ends of each rolled biscuit. Chill in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes or until ready to serve.

VARIATION

Brandy Snap Baskets

Remove the biscuits from the oven, allow to set for a few seconds, then drape over the upturned bottoms of greased muffin tins or glasses, pressing lightly with a dry cloth. When cool and crisp, remove and store in an airtight container. Fill baskets with ice-cream, sorbet or berries to serve.

Note There's a little skill involved in timing the baking so that the biscuits don't stick to the trays, and in rolling them gently and quickly to shape them. They must be kept in an airtight container once cooled. When filling them, do so close to serving time.



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