

West Virginia Biscuits and Gravy

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West Virginia became a state in 1863 after separating from Virginia during the Civil War. It has the longest steel bridge and the third largest cave in the U.S. and is the leader in coal production. The coal miners and mountaineers work hard. When you work hard, a good, rib-stickin' breakfast is necessary. And what do these hard working folks eat? Biscuits. Biscuits smothered in thick, rich, sausage gravy.

In fact, Tudor's Biscuit World (a West Virginia icon) serves the biggest, fluffiest and most amazing buttermilk biscuits served in a variety of ways. Here's one – the Ron (named after a regular customer). A big, fluffy biscuit with sausage, cheese and egg. And Tudor's claims to be the ones that invented the Biscuit Sandwich (they have quite a few variations).

Here I present my version of the biscuits and gravy AND the Ron. Ready to get cooking?

Here's How to Do it:

Start with the biscuits. They've gotta be buttermilk biscuits to be a West Virginia biscuit.

Cut the cold butter into small pieces and,

using a pastry cutter, blend it into the dry ingredients until it looks like cornmeal.

Slowly pour in the buttermilk – just enough to make a soft dough.

Turn the dough out onto a floured surface and roll to about 1/2 to 3/4 inches thick.

Using a large cup or biscuit cutter, cut biscuits into rounds. Gently roll any remaining dough into a flat ball.

Place them on a cookie sheet close to each other.

Bake at 375° until they are golden brown on top, about 15 to 20 minutes.

Brush the tops with melted butter and keep warm until you are ready to serve them (or refrigerate and re-heat later).

NOTE: You can make your own self rising flour.

Mix 1 cup of all-purpose flour sifted with 1-1/2 teaspoons baking powder and 1/4 teaspoon of salt.

For this recipe you'd mix a teaspoon of salt and 2 Tablespoons baking powder with the 4 cups of flour. Be sure to sift it so it's well blended.

Now the gravy.

Break the sausage into large chunks and brown in a skillet (I like cast iron).

Once the sausage is cooked through, add the butter and stir until it's melted. Slowly stir in the flour and continue to stir until it starts to turn golden.

Whisk in the butter milk and then the regular milk. Keep whisking until it's fully blended, then continue to stir with a wooden spoon. When the gravy is thickened, add salt and pepper to taste.

Set on the back burner to keep warm or serve it up right now – smothering a big biscuit.

For the Ron,

Make patties with the sausage, a bit bigger than the circumference of the biscuits.

Brown in a skillet on both sides, making sure it is fully cooked inside.

While they are cooking, open up the biscuits and put a slice of cheese on the bottom half. Place in a warm oven to melt the cheese.

Push the patties to the side and cook the eggs in the skillet. I made them over medium – you can make them the way you like them.

Take out the biscuits and place a sausage patty on top of the cheese, topped with the egg and the biscuit top.

You can add some gravy to the sandwich if you want, but the original doesn't.

And now you have a hearty breakfast to get you started on a busy day.