

Biscuits and Gravy

This is comfort food at its absolute best. Classic Southern buttermilk biscuits with a rich, creamy sausage gravy. (My husband's favorite brunch)

Ingredients:

	For the buttermilk biscuits:
2 1/2 cups	self-rising flour (plus extra for flouring your surface)
2 teaspoons	sugar (optional)
1/2 teaspoon	kosher salt
4 tablespoons	vegetable shortening (see baking tips below)
4 tablespoons	butter, cut into cubes, chilled
1 cup	chilled buttermilk, plus 1-2 tablespoons more, if needed
1 tablespoon	melted butter (optional, to brush on top of biscuits after baking)
	For the sausage gravy:
1 pound	sage-flavored pork sausages
1/4 cup	finely chopped white or yellow onions
6 tablespoons	all-purpose flour
4 cups	whole milk
1/2 teaspoon	poultry seasoning
1/4 teaspoon	ground nutmeg
1/4 teaspoon	salt

1 2 dashes	1-2 of Worcestershire sauce
1 2 dashes	1-2 of tabasco sauce, cayenne pepper, or other hot sauce
1 2 tablespoons	1-2 butter or bacon grease (if needed)

Directions:

Preheat oven to 450°F:

Prepare a floured surface for shaping the dough and have an greased large cast iron skillet or baking sheet ready

Whisk together flour, sugar and salt in a medium-sized bowl.

Cut in the shortening and butter:

Using a fork or a pastry blender, cut in the shortening and butter. Work quickly, you do not want the fats to melt – the key to fluffy biscuits is minimal handling. The mixture should be crumbly.

Add the buttermilk and stir:

Make a well in the flour mixture and pour in the buttermilk. Stir with a spoon and blend just until the liquid is absorbed and the dough comes away from the sides of the bowl – add 1-2 tablespoons more buttermilk if the dough is dry. Do not over mix; the dough will be tacky, neither wet nor dry.

Fold and shape dough:

With lightly floured hands, turn out the dough onto a lightly floured surface and gently fold it over on itself 2 or 3 times. Shape into a 3/4 thick round. If you use a rolling pin, be sure to flour it first to keep the dough from sticking to the pin.

Cut out biscuits:

Using a 2-inch biscuit cutter, cut out the biscuits pressing straight down. Dip the cutter in flour between cuttings to keep the dough from sticking to the cutter.

Place biscuits in the greased cast iron pan so that they just touch (for crunchy sides, leave space in between). Reshape scrap dough and continue cutting. Remember to handle the dough as little as possible.

(At this point you can start on making the sausage gravy below and put the biscuits in the oven right before adding the milk in the last gravy step.)

Bake.

Bake at 450°F for 15-18 minutes or until lightly golden brown on top. Turn the baking sheet around halfway through baking.

Brush with butter:

(Optional) Brush the tops of the biscuits with melted butter.

To Make the Sausage Gravy

Brown the sausage, stir in onions:

Preheat a 4-quart saucepan over medium high heat. Crumble the sausage into the pan and let it brown for a few minutes, then turn down to medium heat.

Continue cooking, breaking up the sausage into smaller pieces, until no pink remains. Stir in the onions and cook until they are transparent.

Adjust fat, add flour, brown the flour:

Remove sausage with a slotted spatula or spoon, leaving the drippings in the pan. If less than 3 tablespoons of drippings remain, add enough butter (or bacon grease) to equal about 3 tablespoons of drippings.

Add the cooked sausage back to the pan on medium heat, and sprinkle the flour over the sausage.

Stir in the flour and cook for about 6-8 minutes, until the mixture starts bubbling and turns slightly golden brown.

Add seasonings:

Stir in poultry seasoning, nutmeg, Worcestershire sauce, Tabasco sauce and salt – cook for 1 minute to deepen the flavors.

Add the milk, and cook until thickened:

Slowly add the milk and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until thickened (about 15 minutes). Be patient, it will thicken!

Serve the biscuits and gravy:

To serve, break a biscuit in half and put it in a bowl or on a plate. Spoon a generous portion of sausage gravy over the biscuit half and top with the other biscuit half.

