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“Irish Soda Bread,” in *A Taste of Ireland* [TX 652.C37 no. 458]

Original Recipe

1½ lb. (6 cups) plain flour
½ pt. (1 cup) buttermilk, sour milk, or fresh milk; if the last, 1 teasp. Cream of tartar is added to dry ingredients
1 teasp. bicarbonate of soda
1 teasp. Salt

Mix all the dry ingredients together in a basin and make a well in the centre. Add enough milk to make a thick dough. Stir with a wooden spoon; the pouring should be done in large quantities, not spoonful by spoonful. The mixture should be slack but not wet and the mixing done lightly and quickly. Add a little more milk if it seems too stiff. With floured hands put on to a lightly floured board or table and flatten the dough into a circle about 1 ½ inch thick. Put on to a baking sheet, and make a large cross over it with a floured knife. (This is to ensure even distribution of heat.) Bake in a moderate to hot oven (375 F- 400 F electric; gas regulo 5) for about 40 minutes. Test the centre with a skewer before removing from the oven. To keep the bread soft, it is wrapped up in a clean tea-towel. This quantity will make 1 large loaf or 2 small ones.

Modern Recipe

4 C (480g) flour (and more for dusting)
4 Tbsp sugar
1 tsp baking soda
1.5 tsp salt
4 Tbsp cold unsalted butter, cut into ½” cubes
1 ¾ C cold buttermilk
1 extra large egg, beaten
1 tsp grated orange zest
1 cup dried currants or raisins

Preheat oven to 375 F. Line sheet pan with parchment.

Combine flour, sugar, baking soda, and salt in a stand mixer with paddle attachment. Add butter and mix on low until butter is incorporated into the dry mix.

In a separate bowl, lightly beat buttermilk, egg and orange zest.

With mixer on low, slowly add buttermilk mixture. Combine currants (or raisins) with 1 Tbsp flour and mix into dough. Dough will be very wet.

Dump dough onto well-floured board and knead a few times into a round loaf. Place the loaf on prepared sheet pan and light cut an “x” into the top of the loaf with a floured knife. Bake 45-55 minutes or until cake tester comes out clean. When you tap the loaf it will sound hollow.

Cool on a baking rack.