

EDITOR'S MIXING BOWL

As the troubled year of 2008 was drawing to a close, I found myself attempting to perfect the art of the breakfast scone. It was a joint project with my mother—something that brought order, comfort, and purpose to the days just after my father, Paul Wartman Koehler, passed away.

I'm not sure we ever got it quite right, but several mornings a week, we pulled out the ingredients, discussing proportions of whole wheat and white pastry flour, butter, sugar, buttermilk, baking soda, baking powder, and salt, determining just when to knead in the frozen blueberries, and debating over whether the oven temperature should be 350° or 425°. The recipe you see below still needs some work, but ultimately it wasn't the recipe that mattered—it was about being in the warm kitchen and celebrating both our family memories and our time together in the present moment. After breakfast, the scones we didn't eat sat in a basket in the kitchen, turning out to be of great value as evidence to anyone who came around looking to make sure that we were still eating.

The blueberries were from the summer's harvest in northwestern Pennsylvania where my parents and siblings reside. My mother's freezer is jammed full of blueberries, since everyone who gardens there finds great success a few years after planting a couple of blueberry bushes. Like people do with zucchinis in most parts, offering buckets of blueberries to neighbors is the thing to do there in Pennsylv-tucky. (Yes, Pennsylv-tucky—during my stay, this is what I heard some of the locals calling their beautiful but forgotten corner of the world.) Fortunately, blueberries freeze well and a handful of them can be as good to eat as a popsicle (but without the added sugar). In fact, many fruits can be good this way, and freezing is a no-brainer way of preserving fruit at the peak of its seasonal perfection. Think about that as our year of produce unfolds and maybe you'll find you have some good things to bake with next winter, or at any time in your life when you need to be in a warm kitchen with your mother.

—Cheryl Angelina Koehler

PENNSYLTUCKY BLUEBERRY BUTTERMILK SCONES

2 cups whole wheat or white pastry flour (or a combination of the two)

2 tablespoons sugar

2 ½ teaspoons baking powder

½ teaspoon baking soda

¾ teaspoon salt

½ cup butter (1 stick), frozen

1 cup buttermilk (plus a few tablespoons more, if needed)

¾ cup frozen blueberries

Coarse sugar

Preheat oven to 425°.

In a medium bowl, stir the flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, and salt together with a fork. Grate the butter into the flour mixture, using the coarse holes of a box grater. Stir the mixture gently to distribute the butter.

Make a well in the center of the ingredients and pour in the buttermilk, stirring lightly with a fork. Toss in the frozen blueberries and stir a little more to distribute the berries. If the dough seems dry, add another tablespoon or two of buttermilk.

Gather the dough into a ball, pressing gently so it holds together and pushing any loose berries into the dough. Place the dough onto a lightly floured board or pastry cloth and roll it out to about a ½-inch thickness. With a serrated knife, cut the dough into parallelograms, or any shape that pleases you. Brush the tops of the scones with a little butter-milk and sprinkle with some coarse sugar, if you like.

Bake for 10 to 12 minutes or until golden brown. Transfer to a rack to cool.



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