All-Purpose Biscuits

- **2 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting**
- **2 tablespoons baking powder**
- **1 scant tablespoon sugar**
- **1 teaspoon salt**
- **5 tablespoons cold, unsalted butter, preferably European style**
- **1 cup whole milk.**

1. Preheat oven to 425. Sift flour, baking powder, sugar and salt into a large mixing bowl. Transfer to a food processor. Cut butter into pats and add to flour, then pulse 5 or 6 times until the mixture resembles rough crumbs. (Alternatively, cut butter into flour in the mixing bowl using a fork or a pastry cutter.) Return dough to bowl, add milk and stir with a fork until it forms a rough ball.

2. Turn the dough out onto a well-floured surface and pat it down into a rough rectangle, about an inch thick. Fold it over and gently pat it down again. Repeat. Cover the dough loosely with a kitchen towel and allow it to rest for 30 minutes.

3. Gently pat out the dough some more, so that the rectangle is roughly 10 inches by 6 inches. Cut dough into biscuits using a floured glass or biscuit cutter. Do not twist cutter when cutting; this crimps the edges of the biscuit and impedes its rise.

4. Place biscuits on a cookie sheet and bake until golden brown, approximately 10 to 15 minutes. *Serves 6 to 8.*

Cake-Flour Biscuits

- **2¼ cups cake flour, plus more for dusting**
- **1 tablespoon baking powder**
- **1 scant tablespoon sugar**
- **1 teaspoon salt**
- **3 tablespoons cold lard**
- **3 tablespoons cold unsalted butter, preferably European style**
- **¼ cup whole milk.**

1. Preheat oven to 425. Sift flour, baking powder, sugar and salt into a large mixing bowl. Transfer to a food processor. Cut lard and butter into pats and add to flour, then pulse 5 or 6 times until the mixture resembles rough crumbs. (Alternatively, cut lard and butter into flour in the mixing bowl using a fork or a pastry cutter.) Return dough to bowl, add milk and stir with a fork until it forms a rough ball.

2. Turn the dough out onto a well-floured surface and pat it down into a rough rectangle, about an inch thick. Fold it over and pat it down again, as gently as you can. Repeat. Now gently pat out the dough some more, so that the rectangle is roughly 10 inches by 6 inches. Cut dough into biscuits using a floured glass or biscuit cutter. Do not twist cutter when cutting; this crimps the edges of the biscuit and impedes its rise.

3. Place biscuits on a cookie sheet and bake until golden brown, approximately 10 to 15 minutes. *Serves 6 to 8.*

Sausage Gravy

- **1 pound bulk pork breakfast sausage**
- **¼ cup all-purpose flour, or instant flour like Wondra**
- **1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, or to taste**
- **2½ cups whole milk**
- **Salt, ground sage, ground fennel and ground red pepper to taste.**

1. Set a large, heavy-bottomed skillet over medium heat and cook the sausage, breaking it up with a wooden spoon, until it is loose and no longer pink, approximately 10 minutes. Taste sausage and adjust seasonings — you may wish to add sage and fennel aggressively.

2. Sprinkle the flour and pepper over the sausage and cook, stirring constantly, until the flour has been absorbed by the fat and has gathered its flavors close, approximately 5 to 7 minutes.

3. Slowly stir in the milk and cook at a bare simmer until the gravy gets thick and the roux covers the back of a spoon. If it is too thick for your liking add more milk and stir. Check seasonings and serve over split or roughly crumbled biscuits. *Serves 6 to 8.* ◆