

Biscuit-Bacon Dressing

Serves 10

This recipe uses biscuits made with White Lilly flour. It used to be that this fine, tender flour was only available east of the Mississippi, but now it's easily ordered and shipped anywhere in the United States. Make a large batch of biscuits; you'll want plenty for the dressing and a few extra to indulge in right out of the oven...

for the biscuits:

6 cups White Lily all-purpose flour
3 tablespoons baking powder
3 teaspoons salt
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup vegetable shortning
2 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups buttermilk
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter, melted

for the dressing:

12 4-inch biscuits, cut into 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch cubes
1 lb. best quality, thick-cut smokey bacon, cut into 1-inch pieces
2 yellow onions, diced
5 stalks celery, diced
8 oz button or cremini mushrooms, sliced
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup flat leaf parsley, chopped
2 tablespoons chopped fresh sage
2 tablespoons chopped fresh thyme
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
5 cups chicken stock

For the biscuits, preheat oven to 475 degrees. Combine flour, baking powder and salt in a large bowl. Cut in shortening with pastry blender or two knives until the crumbs are the size of peas. Blend in just enough buttermilk with fork until dough leaves the sides of the bowl. Turn dough onto lightly floured surface. Knead gently 5 to 6 times, just until smooth. Roll dough into a circle that is $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thick. Cut out biscuits with a floured 3-inch biscuit cutter. Place on baking sheet, about 2 inches apart. Shape dough scraps again into a disc, and cut out additional biscuits. Bake 8-10 minutes or until lightly brown. Brush with melted butter.

For the dressing, position a rack in the lower third of an oven and preheat to 350 degrees. Spread the cut biscuits out on a baking sheet, and toast until lightly browned, 25 to 30 minutes (the process here is to remove most of the moisture from the biscuits). Set aside.

Adjust oven temperature to 375 degrees. In a deep saute pan over medium-high heat, cook the bacon until crisp, 7 to 9 minutes. Transfer to paper towels to drain. Remove all but about 3 tablespoons of bacon fat from the pan, and add onions. Cook

over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until the onions are soft and lightly browned. Add celery, mushrooms, parsley, sage and thyme and cook until the celery is soft, about 5 minutes. Transfer the onion mixture to a large bowl. Add the bacon to the bowl and season with salt and pepper. Add the biscuits and stock and stir to combine.

Transfer the dressing to a baking dish and cover with aluminum foil. Bake for 30 minutes, then remove the foil and bake until the dressing is lightly browned, about 20 minutes more. Serve hot.