

Patricia's Recipe and Family Story:

Grandma Lou's Scottish Shortbread

Ingredients:

1 Cup butter, softened
½ Cup sugar (castor's or very fine sugar if available)
2 ½ Cups all-purpose flour (sift three times, then measure)

Directions:

Cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy; then cream for a minute more. Gradually cut in flour until dough is stiff and pulls away from sides of bowl forming a ball. Knead a few times on a floured board, but don't handle too much.

Pat into a flattened round and cut into four sections. Press each section into a floured mold and quickly tap out onto un-greased baking pans. Pierce deeply with fork (this keeps the bread 'short' or crisp.) Score each cake into eight sections to make 'petticoat tails.' Sprinkle lightly with sugar.

Bake at 325° for about 35 minutes or until done. Shortbread should not brown very much. Cool on pans for about 10 minutes before removing carefully with large spatula to wire racks.

Enjoy with a properly brewed cup of tea!
Store in airtight tins.

Family Notes:

These are the directions first given to me in 1972 by my mother-in-law, Louisa Reid. Lou worked at the McVitie & Price shortbread factory in Edinburgh in the 1930's. Lou used a horse for the delivery of their famous shortbread to the shops of Edinburgh. She laughingly recalled being put up on the back of one of these huge animals by some of the men who drove the teams.

I don't sift the flour three times as she did, and I have seldom found the castor's sugar to use in my shortbread. In 32 years of baking it, I haven't had many complaints. Maybe that's because I listened to Lou when she told me to cream the butter and sugar just a little more. Lou's spirit is always there with me when I'm baking. When I get the creamed butter just right (in my eyes), I always beat it another full minute, imagining Mum beside me saying, "just a wee bit more, dear-r-r."