

Savory Scones with Kalamata Olives, Sun-dried Tomatoes and Feta

By Susie Iventosch



Photo Susie Iventosch

These savory scones are so delicious and make a wonderful dinner roll or savory snack. Made with Kalamata olives, sun-dried tomatoes, feta and blue cheese, they are the perfect accompaniment to chicken or lamb dishes and fantastic in place of French bread to go with your next pasta dish.

I love the way the cheese and Kalamata olives pair in this recipe, but you can also use green Greek olives and grated cheddar cheese if you prefer those flavors. There are any number of combinations you can use when making scones whether they are sweet

or savory, and it's really up to your own tastes and imagination. When it comes to savory scones, another favorite of mine is turkey bacon, sharp cheddar, and chives and they're great for breakfast, lunch, or dinner. Scones are a super easy to make. I use my basic scone recipe for these savory scones but cut back on most of sugar and all the vanilla before adding the savory ingredients: cheese, olives and sun-dried tomatoes.

The key to making good scones is to have your butter really cold and to handle the dough as little as possible. I

grate or cut the butter into very small pieces before even adding it to the flour mixture, and then use a pastry cutter to cut it into the dries. If you don't own a pastry cutter, don't worry, you can use your fingertips to cut the butter into the flour by rubbing it and crumbling the butter into the dries. Some people freeze the butter first and then grate it with a cheese grater to get the pieces of butter super small before cutting them into the flour. Also, chilling the cut scones for about 10-20 minutes on the baking sheet in the refrigerator before baking them makes for a nice flaky scone.

I normally use 2% milk for our scones, but cream or half and half also work beautifully if you can handle the fat content. We have scones quite often, so we prefer to go with milk. Sometimes, we use buttermilk in our scones, too, and that offers up a slightly tangier flavor. It's really up to you as to which dairy product you prefer in your scones. I have yet to try making them with an alternative milk like almond or oat milk. I imagine those would work well for sweet scones, but not so sure about the savory versions.

Whenever possible, I make a big batch of scones so we can eat some now and freeze some for serving later;

they last for several months in the freezer. When you're ready to serve them, remove them from the freezer, and re-heat them on a low oven

temperature, or in the toaster oven until heated through and a little bit crispy on the top and edges. They also hold up well in the refrigerator

for several days in an airtight container. There's nothing quite like a cup of tea or coffee and a scone if a friend stops by for a visit!

INGREDIENTS

- 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 2 tsp. cream of tartar
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. granulated sugar
- 4 oz. butter, chilled and cut into small 1/4-inch pieces
- 3/4 cup Kalamata olives, halved or quartered
- 1/3 cup sun-dried tomatoes, chopped
- 1/4 cup crumbled blue cheese
- 1/4 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 3/4 (+/-) cup milk, or cream, or half and half - your choice
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese (for topping)

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 425F. Prepare a baking sheet with cooking spray or parchment paper.

Sift flour, salt, baking soda and cream of tartar into a bowl. Stir in sugar. Using a pastry cutter or cold fingertips, cut the butter pieces into the dries until the pieces of butter are like small peas.

Stir in the sun-dried tomatoes, Kalamata olives, blue cheese, and feta. Mix well. Add milk all at once and mix just until integrated. You may need slightly more milk, depending upon the flour you use, so just have a little bit handy. It's better to need to add a little more, than to have added too much. But, if you do accidentally add too much, simply sift in a little more flour until you get to a good dough consistency that is not too wet or too dry.

Turn dough onto floured cloth or board and gather into a ball. You may need to absorb a little of the extra flour for this step, but be careful to not over handle your dough - use a light touch. Roll the dough ball out to about 1 1/4 inch in thickness. Cut dough into 8 triangles for large scones, or 12 triangles for smaller scones. Or, you can also use a biscuit cutter dipped in flour if you prefer round scones.

Place scones on prepared baking sheet and evenly distribute the Parmesan cheese over the tops of each scone. Refrigerate the scones for 10-20 minutes before baking. This lets the butter firm up, resulting in a flakier pastry.

Remove scones from the refrigerator and bake for approximately 12-14 minutes, or until the tops begin to turn golden-brown and Parmesan is beginning to brown. Remove from oven and eat hot, or at room temperature, or store in an airtight container. You can also freeze the scones in a baggie or airtight container for serving later.



Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com. This recipe can be found on our website: www.lamorindaweekly.com if you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977. Or visit <https://treksandbites.com>



Conversations with Your Aging Parents About Organizing and Downsizing for the Future

By Jennifer Raftis, CPO®



Jennifer Raftis and her mom, Pat Cox Photo provided

As our parents age, the conversation about downsizing can become a necessary yet sensitive topic. For many elderly individuals, the thought of leaving their longtime home and parting with cherished possessions can be overwhelming. While not all seniors need or want to downsize, it's important to start planning for the next chapter, having conversations that will approach this topic with sensitivity, empathy, and practicality. This subject is particularly personal to me as my mother (my favorite person in the entire world) and I had to have this conversation just a few years ago. Here's a guide to help you and your parents navigate these important discussions.

Timing
Timing can be crucial when bringing up the subject of downsizing. It can be helpful to choose a time when your parents are relaxed and not preoccupied with other stressors. Avoid discussing this topic during holidays or family gatherings, which can already be emotionally

charged. A quiet, private setting where everyone feels comfortable will facilitate a more open and honest conversation.

Understanding
Begin the conversation by acknowledging the emotional weight of the situation. Recognize that downsizing can feel like losing a part of their identity and past. Express your understanding of their feelings and reassure them that you're there to support them through every step of the process.

Benefits
Highlighting the benefits of downsizing, focusing on the positive aspects is very important. If they are downsizing to move, talk about how a smaller, more manageable space can lead to less maintenance, lower expenses, and increased safety. It can even give them a chance to be closer to family, friends, or medical facilities. A retirement community can be a social game changer for your parents (especially if they don't drive).

Collaboration
This conversation is the starting point of what

your parents want and need at this stage of their life. Are they having health issues, physical or mental? Are they aware of their issues? Maybe the adult children are starting to get concerned but the parents are not seeing the problems. Again, timing and sensitivity are the key factors here.

Options and Solutions
If the children are concerned about the safety of their parents remaining in their home alone, starting a solution based conversation is helpful. Some of the topics could cover their health care needs, transportation and social needs going forward. Are they still able to drive to medical appointments? Do they need some sort of medical alert fall device? Do they want to remain in their home or move to a community? There are solutions for both that can be discussed with patience and emotional support. Listen to their concerns, validate their feelings, and be prepared for moments of resistance or sadness. Reassure them that it's okay to feel emotional and that you're there to help them navigate their decisions whether they choose to stay in their home or to downsize and relocate.

Seek Professional Guidance
A Certified Professional Organizer® (CPO®) can help with move management details, consignment/donation options, floor planning and hauling as well as sorting through all items in the home. I have been in many situations that involve working with the

adult children and their parents as a neutral third party who can ease emotional burdens. If your parents decide to stay in their home, you can have an agency come and assess the safety aspects of the rooms and can offer solutions for aging needs, such as ramps, grab bars, and fall alert systems. California Department of Aging - These services are provided locally by the Area Agencies of Aging (AAA), Medi-Cal Community Based Adult Services (CBAS), www.aging.ca.gov Are you worried that making changes might be expensive? You may be able to get help paying for repairs and safety updates to your home. Check with your state housing finance agency, social services department, community development groups, or the federal government for financial aid programs and discounts. If your parents decide to move to a community, there are agencies that will take your parents to several communities to visit in person. I have been working with Bryan at Care Placement Advisors for 8 years and he is amazing, Bryan Riddle at bryan@careplacementadvisors.com. Another great local agency that serves the Bay Area is Exceptional Senior Placement owned by David and Rachel Cohen, you can reach David at david@eseniorplacement.com. Conversations with your aging parents require a balance of empathy, patience and practical support. By approaching the

subject with sensitivity and collaboration with the decision-making process, you can help them navigate this significant transition with

confidence. Remember, the goal is to ensure their comfort, safety and happiness as they embark on this new chapter of their lives.

Professional Organizer, Jennifer Raftis, CPO® founded Efficiency Matters, LLC to help you with all of your organizing needs for your home and business. She is a Certified Professional Organizer and an active board member with NAPO, National Association of Productivity and Organizing Professionals. She is also an independent representative for The Container Store and has expertise in designing closets, garages, pantries, playrooms and more. In addition, she is a Corporate Organizing and Productivity Consultant and has worked with Fortune 500 companies across the U.S. Another large part of her business is move management especially working with seniors who are downsizing. She and her husband have lived in Moraga for 30 years, raising 3 kids and working countless volunteer hours with many local non-profit organizations and schools. Jennifer@efficiencymattersllc.com, 925-698-3756 www.afficiencymattersllc.com



TREKS & BITES SPICE BLENDS

"TASTE THE ADVENTURE IN EVERY BOTTLE"



Available at Diablo Foods in the Spice Section or @ treksandbites.com