

CAKES-BISCUITS





Cereals Processing Toolkit



CAKES-BISCUITS

1.- General information

Biscuits are a baked product, usually made from wheat flour together with fat and sugar. They are made in a variety of shapes and sizes and may contain dried fruits, nuts and food colours. They are a dry product, usually with a golden brown colour and a crisp texture.

Savoury biscuits can be made by omitting the sugar and adding salt, herbs, spices and cheese.

Cakes are available in many shapes and styles. The simplest cakes have a light spongy texture and are made by beating together fat and sugar, adding eggs and flour. The cake mixture is beaten to incorporate air, which makes the sponge light and airy. Flour is gently added to bind together the creamed butter sugar and egg mixture.

The more air that is incorporated during beating makes a lighter cake.

A range of different ingredients (including dried fruits, fresh fruit, spices, flavours) can be added to the basic cake mixture to make a variety of cakes.



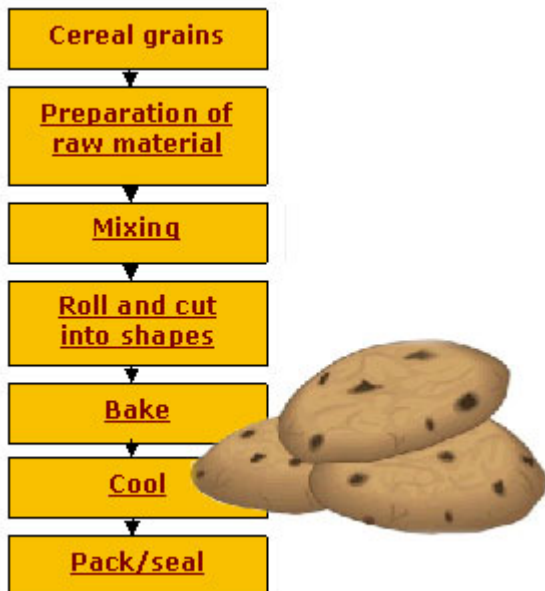
2.- Processing details for biscuits production

Suitability for small scale production

Cakes and biscuits are popular products that are consumed by most income groups. Biscuits have a fairly long shelf life (several months) when stored in proper conditions. Pastries and cakes have a shelf life of 2-5 days depending on the type of product and the storage conditions. Baked goods are fairly safe products in terms of their ability to cause food poisoning. However, it is necessary to check the quality of raw materials. Baked goods provide plenty of scope for the producer to use locally available ingredients to create a variety of products. In general it is more profitable to produce buns, cakes and biscuits than bread.

Constraints to production

Availability of packaging materials may be a problem in some remote areas. It is difficult to predict the profitability for these goods as prices for wheat flour vary from country to country and are affected by import subsidies.



Mixing and beating

When making cakes, the fat and sugar should be beaten together so that they trap air and become light and creamy. It is advisable to use an electric mixer as this incorporates more air than can be done by hand. The eggs should be beaten in slowly to prevent the mixture from curdling.

The sieved flour should slowly be added to the creamed mixture so that it does not reduce the amount of air that has been beaten in. The amount of air incorporated into the mixture determines the size of the final cake and the openness of the texture.

With biscuits it is important that the ingredients are well mixed to form a dough that is kneaded to make a smooth finish. Biscuits do not need to be as light as cakes.

Roll and cut

Biscuit dough is rolled out to about 4-5mm thickness. It is cut using different shaped cutters.

Baking

Biscuits are baked in a hot oven (200-250°C) for 5-20 minutes depending upon the temperature and size and thickness of the biscuits.

Cakes are baked in a cooler oven (150-200°C) depending on the size and type of the cake. Larger cakes need lower temperatures to ensure that they cook throughout without burning on the surface. It is essential to control the time and temperature of baking as they affect the colour, texture, flavour and moistness of the product.

The oven door should not be opened during the baking of cakes. This introduces cooler air and may cause the cake to sink, which spoils the appearance and the texture.

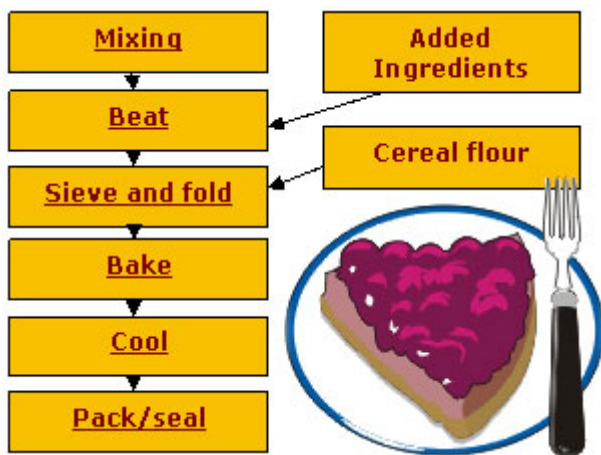
Cool

It is important to transfer cooked biscuits and cakes onto wire cooling racks to allow them to cool after baking. If they are left on the baking trays, condensation may form as the products cool, causing them to soften.

Pack/Seal

The products should be properly cooled before packing into moisture proof bags. Biscuits containing a high proportion of fat or with a cream filling require a more complex type of packaging. Small scale processors should investigate the availability and cost of packaging before making these products.

3.- Processing details for cakes production



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4.- Basic recipes

Basic biscuit mixture

Reference: Fellows 1997

250g soft wheat flour

65g margarine

7g baking powder

pinch of salt

1 egg

20g sugar

15g milk or water

Biscuits are a baked product, usually made from wheat flour in a large variety of shapes, sizes, textures and flavours. They are dry, usually golden brown and with a crisp texture. Ingredients such as dried fruits or nuts can be added to vary the flavour. For rapid baking, the thickness of the biscuit is usually no more than 3-4mm. The biscuits have a shelf life of several months when stored properly in a cool dry place.

1. Sieve the flour through a 1mm sieve to remove lumps and impurities.
2. Mix the flour, margarine, baking powder and salt together either by hand or with an electric mixer.
3. In a separate container mix the egg with sugar and milk or water.
4. Add the liquid to the flour mixture and knead, either by hand or machine, to form a smooth dough.
5. Roll out to about 5mm thickness using a rolling pin.
6. Cut into the desired shape using a knife or shaped cutter.
7. Bake at 200-250°C for 5 to 20 minutes until golden brown.
8. Cool to room temperature on a wire rack. Pack in sealed plastic packets. Store in a cool dry place.