

Cheddar and Scallion Biscuits on a Sunday Morning

It's Sunday and I'm not going to work tomorrow. Wait. Waaaait wait wait. Before I even get into anything we have to take a moment of silence for the fact that my co-blogger, Jeremy, and I are both in the same state. Holler! Every winter Jeremy and his family venture to Little Israel, otherwise known as South Florida, and spend two weeks lounging by the pool and seeing movies every night while the rest of the world is eating Chinese food and throwin' bows (a.k.a. elbows) at the local mall. I visited them last year on their vacay. It was pretty awesome, except for the fact that I was in my first trimester of pregnancy and was fighting the need to puke at all cost as no one knew I was pregnant. Fun times. This year we have big plans of going to see Les Miz and crying in our popcorn buckets. I can't wait.



Jeremy and I in a scene from Les Miz. What? Ya'll didn't know we were in it? Weird.

But anyway. It's finally 'winter break' and it's actually been cold in Florida for the past 2 days. I mean we dipped down into the 60s here people. I'm very excited to have a week and a half straight with the family. We have some plans but mostly I hope we get to cook and sleep a little and enjoy this gorgeous weather together.

We kicked off winter break this morning with a visit from some dear friends of ours from our Israel days. The hubby and I met in Israel over 4 years ago. He was in Israel to get his Master's degree in Marine Sciences from Hebrew University and I had decided to take a year to learn in an egalitarian yeshiva in Jerusalem called Pardes. Pardes is one of those places where you either drink the kool-aid and 'get it' or you don't drink the kool-aid and you run away fast. I drank the kool-aid. I love Pardes and will forever be grateful for what it gave me. I was raised in the Reform movement in Marietta, GA and had a wonderful experience with the Judaism. I participated in youth group activities and was really involved in my synagogue. My Jewish identity was strong and even led me to take jobs within the Jewish community however my knowledge-base of anything Jewish was extremely limited. I used to lead Birthright Israel trips and my participants would call me "super Jew" because it blew their minds that I got paid to go to Israel and I worked in the Jewish community yet I knew I was most certainly NOT a 'super Jew'. I didn't keep kosher. I definitely didn't keep shabbat (not that either of those makes you a 'super' Jew) and I didn't know much about laws and well, really anything. I just knew I loved being Jewish. By the time I made my decision to do a year of intensive Jewish learning I was 28 and fed up with not knowing the answers to a lot of the "Jewish" questions I was asked so off to Israel I went.

Pardes is a special place. It's the only co-ed, egalitarian (but with an Orthodox lens) yeshiva in Israel. People from all over the world come to Pardes to study in this environment.

The learning at Pardes is incredible—by the time I left my brain was able to look at things and think about things in ways I never could before. When you study Torah and you're trying to decipher the meaning of a certain text, well, let's just say now I get why people are good at law.

Most everyone who was in the same 'year' program I was had relatively the same background that I have; loved being Jewish but was definitely searching for something more. Due to my inability to get passed the 4th letter of the Hebrew alphabet on my entrance exam I was placed in the 'newbie' class and can I just say, thank goodness. The people who also placed in this class were pretty amazing. We were a motley crew who I think, if we tried really hard and combined our collective knowledge, could probably say the entire Hebrew alphabet and most of us were still eating cheeseburgers when we started our year at Pardes. However, by the end of our year of learning, most of us were able to read directly from the Chumash, and were keeping kosher and shabbat. My year at Pardes was one of the best years of my life. I hope Pardes is still alive and thriving by the time our children are old enough to study. It would truly be a dream come true if they could study there as well.



Some of our Pardes friends at our wedding.

I launched into all of this because I'm still very close with a lot of the people I met at Pardes and two such friends, Ali and Noam, came over this morning for a lovely breakfast. So many of my Pardes friends were at our wedding, which was so lovely. And now, three years after we left Pardes, our friends are meeting our daughter. It's pretty awesome. To celebrate our friends' morning visit, I decided to go big and make cheddar and scallion biscuits. What else would you expect from a Southern Jewess when her friends stop y for a morning visit?



Flour



Pea-sized butter. It's in there!



Scallion-flecked dough

White Cheddar and Scallion Biscuits

What!?

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1/4 pound (1 stick) cold unsalted butter, diced

- 3/4 cup half-and-half
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh scallions
- 1/2 cup white cheddar
- 1 egg mixed with 1 tablespoon water, for egg wash

How's That Now?!

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F.

Combine the flour, baking powder, salt, and sugar in the bowl. Stir with flat spatula. Add the butter and mix using a crust cutter until the butter is the size of peas. Slowly add the half-and-half and beat until just mixed. Add the scallions and the cheddar and mix until just combined.

Dump the dough out on a well-floured board and knead lightly into a rectangle 3/4-inch thick. Cut out rounds with a 2 1/2-inch round cutter* and place on a sheet pan lined with parchment paper. Brush with the egg wash.

Bake for 20 to 22 minutes, until the tops are browned and the insides are firm. Serve warm.

*If you don't have a round cutter you can always use a glass. That's what I had to do and it worked perfectly.



Flatted dough



Biscuit-y goodness