

## Crumpets

- 2 cups unbleached white bread flour
- 1 2/3 cups unbleached all purpose flour
- 3/4 teaspoon cream of tartar
- 1 0.6 oz cake fresh yeast or 1 envelope active dry yeast (2 1/4 teaspoons) plus 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- 2 1/4 cups lukewarm water
- 3 1/2 teaspoons coarse sea salt, crushed or ground (or half of this if table salt)
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 2/3 cup lukewarm milk
- 4 crumpet rings (or tuna cans), about 3 1/2 inches diameter, greased well with butter



Sift together the flours and cream of tartar into a large bowl. Crumble the fresh yeast into a medium-sized bowl. Mix in the lukewarm water until smooth. If using dry yeast, mix the granules and the sugar with 3/4 cup lukewarm water and let stand until foamy, 5 to 10 minutes. Stir in the remaining lukewarm water. Mix the yeast mixture into the flour to make a very thick, but smooth batter, beating vigorously with your hand or a wooden spoon for two minutes. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and let stand in a warm spot until the batter rises and then falls, about 1 hour.

Add the salt and beat the batter for about 1 minute. Then cover the bowl and let stand in a warm spot for 15 to 20 minutes, so the batter can rest. Dissolve the baking soda in the lukewarm milk. Then gently stir it into the batter. The batter should not be too stiff or your crumpets won't have holes, so it is best to test one before cooking the whole batch.

Heat a very clean griddle or frying pan over moderately low heat for about 3 minutes until very hot. Put a well-greased crumpet ring on the griddle. Spoon or pour 1/3 cup of the batter into the ring. The amount of batter will depend on the size of your crumpet ring.

As soon as the batter is poured into the ring, it should begin to form holes. If holes do not form, add a little more lukewarm water, a tablespoon at a time, to the batter in the bowl and try again. If the batter is too thin and runs out under the ring, gently work in a little more all-purpose flour and try again. Cook the crumpets in batches, three or four at a time. As soon as the top surface is set and covered with holes, 7 to 8 minutes, the crumpet is ready to flip over. To flip the crumpet, remove the ring with a towel or tongs, then turn the crumpet carefully with a spatula. The top, cooked side should be chestnut brown. Cook the second, holey side of the crumpet for 2 to 3 minutes, or until pale golden. The crumpet should be about 3/4 inch thick. Remove the crumpet from the griddle. Grease the crumpet

rings well after each use.

When you're ready to turn the crumpets, though the recipe suggests using tongs, it's just as easy to use a flat knife to nudge the rings up and off the crumpets as soon as the outsides are solid. That way you can set them aside to cool so you can handle them as soon as the crumpets presently in the pan or on the griddle are done.

You can alter this recipe by using two packages of yeast instead of one. It seems to improve the flavor. Also, you don't really need the two kinds of flour for this recipe -- they're preferable, but not absolutely necessary. Just make sure you beat the batter the full two minutes the first time. You want to make sure the gluten develops enough.

When you toast these, do it under the grill / broiler, or in a toaster oven that lets you do just one side. Then slather on that butter...