Scones

Recipe adapted from The River Cottage Bread Handbook (Ten Speed Press)

Makes about 8 scones

- 2 1/4 cups plus 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour, plus extra for dusting
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- Pinch of salt
- 1/3 cup unsalted butter, at room temperature, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 3 1/2 tablespoons superfine sugar
- 1 medium egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- Milk, for brushing

1. Preheat the oven to 400°. In a food processor, blend the flour with the baking powder, salt, butter and sugar until the mixture resembles fine bread crumbs. (Alternatively, sift the flour, baking powder and salt into a mixing bowl, and rub the butter in with your fingers, then stir in the sugar.)

2. In a separate large bowl, beat the egg with the vanilla and cream. Add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients and mix together with your hands to form a soft dough.

3. Turn the dough out onto a floured work surface and knead very briefly, about 10 seconds, to make it a little smoother. Dust the dough with more flour and pat or gently roll it out to a thickness of about 1 1/2 inches.

4. Using a 2 1/2-inch biscuit cutter, cut out 8 disks of dough. Press the cutter straight down, rather than twisting it, to give the scones a better chance of rising straight up.

5. Place the disks on a lightly greased baking sheet and brush the tops with milk. Bake them for about 15 minutes or until a wooden toothpick inserted into the middle comes...
out clean. Transfer the scones to a wire rack to cool for a few minutes. Serve warm.

Mint Syrup

Recipe adapted from The River Cottage Preserves Handbook (Ten Speed Press)

Makes 4 cups

- 2 ounces freshly picked mint leaves, torn
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1 ¼ cups granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon sea salt

1. In a large bowl, muddle the mint leaves with the lemon juice by pounding the leaves with the end of a wooden rolling pin. Add the sugar and salt and continue to crush the mint leaves. Cover and let the mixture macerate for 8 hours or overnight.

2. Pour 2 ½ cups boiling water over the macerated mint mixture and let stand, covered, for an additional 12 hours.

3. Strain the syrup through a very fine mesh sieve or cheesecloth into a medium saucepan. Gently bring the liquid to a simmer and cook for a couple of minutes. Let cool and use immediately or pour the syrup into warm, sterilized bottles and seal with screwcaps or corks.

**Note:** The mint syrup will keep for 4 months before it’s opened. Once opened, it should be stored in the refrigerator. To use, mix 2 teaspoons of the mint syrup into a glass of ice-cold water, lemonade or tonic to create a cooling summer drink.

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