



hi! monkey

A tale of two biscuits



how many times have you heard it - because of the internet, the world is getting smaller every day? english is a universal language and, even with our national linguistic idiosyncrasies, i think we all communicate pretty well, don t you? we know a lorry is a truck and a lift is an elevator. despite the fact that some of us stand in line at the movies while others queue up at the cinema we don t need subtitles to understand the latest hollywood blockbuster or british indy flick. these differences add spice to life, but not when it comes to food.

you say biscuit and i say biscuit, yet we re not speaking the same language. everywhere in the known universe a biscuit is a tasty, sweet bite-sized snack enjoyed with a cup of tea, a glass of milk, a mug of coffee or (dare i say it) alone. but in the united states, a biscuit is a bland scone-esque baked good indigenous to the south. it s usually eaten in the morning slathered with butter or, more often than not, concealed in a pool of white gravy reminiscent of wallpaper paste. unless your diet is seriously lacking in refined white flour and pork fat, ask for a cookie if you yearn for a biccy.

the familiar crisp/chip and chip/french fry nomenclature problem is just the tip of the iceberg. stateside pudding is a thick custard served for dessert and custard is a frozen ice cream. tea is still a beverage in north america, it s just very misunderstood. the southern states embrace it as their own and call it sweet tea (pronounced swee-tea) an iced beverage consisting of an embarrassing

amount of sugar suspended in chilled tea. in the sweet tea region, the word 'sugar' is synonymous with 'kiss' and is the pet name the waitress at any diner calls all her customers regardless of age, race, sex or religion. you have not truly tasted southern hospitality until a waitress calls your tibetan monk friend sugar and then compliments him on his skirt.

regional charm and differences aside, the culinary adventurer needs a rosetta stone to decipher the average american recipe. this is true even in the american kitchen. at one time, tins and packages were fairly standardized. a tin of soup was 10 ounces, a packet of pasta was 12 ounces and a stick of butter was 4 ounces (or just about the weight of a giant panda at birth). today, with tin sizes ranging from individual to economy such instructions are flirting with disaster.

george bernard shaw s quip about two countries divided by a common language may be true: you say sultana, i say golden raisin, you say courgette, i say zucchini, you say aubergine, i say eggplant, you say trifle and i say yes, please! ■

monkey magic...

Cooking Measurement Conversions: tinyurl.com/au7r4

English/American: kryssstal.com/ukandusa.html

A quick ingredient reference: tinyurl.com/bmpb9

Giant panda facts: tinyurl.com/b9x7v

Don t miss the panda cam: tinyurl.com/az646

Sweet tea history: tinyurl.com/9h695

Recipe: www.grits.com/tea.htm tinyurl.com/bor5f

Biscuit recipe: tinyurl.com/cglwt

The definitive biscuit recipe: tinyurl.com/bkg3s