

Tomato Gravy & Biscuits

by J. D. Moss

The face will not lie, not that it won't try. Most people don't have the ability to control their facial expressions. And the better you know someone, their chances of successfully deceiving you become slim unless you're not paying attention and I was paying very close attention.

I watched her eyes move closer together as the fork entered her mouth and the flavor of the food hit her taste buds. Her lips pulled backwards as the fork was pulled out and she stopped chewing. There was no gag reflex. No spitting out the food, yet her attempt at not showing any sign of dislike had failed. I knew this was not a meal she was ever going to try again.

"It's different." She said as she swallowed and reached for a glass of orange juice.

I smiled. It was not the first time someone I knew decided that Tomato Gravy and Biscuits wasn't a meal they cared for. I had planned on that possibility by making eggs and sausage so she would have something to eat just in case. I was not offended, it just meant more for me to eat.

I have always loved tomato gravy. It has been on our family table for several generations. It is not a meal most people know about and you will either love it or hate it. This dish has deep southern roots and comes from our Louisiana side of the family.

I talked to my mom and Aunt Charlotte about their memories of tomato gravy and they both say it was just a meal they always ate, as did many families in rural areas. Most had gardens and tomatoes were usually plentiful. They were easy to get and could be canned to use throughout the year.

It was a meal normally eaten at breakfast but was also seen on the lunch or supper table with meatloaf, hamburger steak, or when ham was served. My grandmother would always make a gravy. It might be a tomato gravy, red-eye gravy, or brown gravy, yet almost always there was gravy.

When it was eaten in the morning it came with hot southern buttermilk biscuits. My mom prefers her tomato gravy made with water, while my aunt likes it made with milk. Mom also noted that the gravy made with leftover bacon grease was better than the gravy made with leftover sausage drippings but also said, "Modern folks" could use a healthier oil.

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**what makes
it great!**

2 Tablespoons oil or bacon drippings.
2 Tablespoons flour.
1/2 teaspoon pepper.
1/2 teaspoon salt.
15 ounce can tomatoes.
1/2 Cup milk or water.
1 small can of tomato sauce.

OPTIONS

There are several variations you can try. Some add garlic or honey, I don't use the tomato sauce, but one thing I strongly recommend - always use tomatoes. The tomatoes give the gravy texture and they are a vital part of the recipe.

Biscuits & Gravy Week

*is on the 2nd week
of September.*

Tomato Gravy

I start with a Cast Iron Skillet, heating the oil to a medium-high heat. I then stir in the flour and cook until it turns a light brown. When making any gravy the key is to keep stirring so no lumps form. Once you have the flour lightly browned you can turn the heat to medium-low and slowly add the water (or milk). If you use milk, do not pour it in cold, let it warm up a bit first.

You will need to constantly stir the gravy to make sure it does not burn or get lumpy. Using a whisk will work as well as a spatula.

Once the mixture is the consistency of a thick soup you can add the tomatoes. Lower the heat and add salt and pepper.

Serve with biscuits.



Photo by J.D. Moss