

Monticello Muffins

¼ teaspoon active dry yeast, or ½ ounce compressed fresh yeast

2 cups water, at room temperature

20 ounces (about 4 cups) unbleached all-purpose flour, including ¼ cup whole wheat pastry flour

1 round teaspoon salt

Rice or corn flour, or fine white cornmeal, as needed

Unsalted butter, for serving

1. Dissolve the yeast in the water in a small bowl and let it proof for 10 minutes. Whisk or stir together the flour and salt in a large bowl. Make a well in the center and pour in the yeasted water, gradually stirring the flour into it. Aggressively stir the dough until it is cohesive and smooth (it will be almost too stiff to stir but too slack to knead by hand). Cover with plastic wrap, or a double-folded damp towel, and set aside to rise until almost doubled, about 3 hours. The dough can also be covered with plastic wrap and allowed to rise overnight in the refrigerator.
2. Lightly dust a work surface with rice or corn flour or cornmeal. If the dough has been refrigerated, let it stand at room temperature for several minutes until it is warmed almost to room temperature. Beat the dough down with a wooden spoon and sprinkle the top with a little rice or corn flour or cornmeal. With lightly floured hands, scoop up small handfuls of dough, shaping each one into a round, flat disk, about ½ inch thick and 2 ½ inches in diameter. Put them on the flour-dusted surface spaced at least 1 inch apart, and let them rest for 15 to 30 minutes.
3. Heat a griddle or wide shallow skillet over medium-low heat. With a spatula, transfer as many muffins as will fit to the griddle with at least 1 inch around them. Cook slowly until the bottoms are lightly browned, about 8 to 10 minutes. Turn, lightly pressing with the spatula, and cook until uniformly browned and set, but still moist at the centers, about 8 minutes longer. Serve hot with butter.