

## Three Kinds of Colonial Cornbread

Back in the 1620s, when our Mayflower ancestors were struggling to survive, corn was a lifesaving grain. Thanks to help from friendly Wampanoag Indians, early Pilgrim settlers learned to plant and harvest corn, and then use it in stew dishes such as succotash; in puddings; and in various baked and fried breads.

Nowadays, modern recipes will give you a fluffy texture and sweet tasting bread. Back in Pilgrim times, however, there were lots more interesting varieties to taste. Here are three recipes that harken back to those early days. Taste and explore!

The earliest settlers learned the recipe for corn pone from Native Americans, who baked corn meal, mixed with water and lard, into small cakes they called "apones." Originally, these were baked among the ashes in an open fire. Later, colonists sometimes even baked them on an actual hoe, calling the result "hoecakes"! Here's a way to bake corn pone in your regular oven.



### What You Need:

- 2 cups cornmeal
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 cup butter, shortening (or, if you're going for historical accuracy, use lard!)
- 3/4 cup boiling water
- 1/2 cup buttermilk
- 1 cup cornmeal
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 1/4 cup boiling water
- 1/4 cup butter
- 1 cup corn meal
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups boiling water
- 1 cup milk
- 4 eggs

### What You Do:

1. For corn pone, start by mixing your "dry" ingredients: the cornmeal, baking soda, and salt. Then add the butter, shortening, or lard, and use a fork or even your fingers to break it up and work it into the mix.
2. Slowly pour in the boiling water and mix thoroughly into a soft dough that you can shape with your hands. Kids especially love this stage when you point out how much it's like play dough that you can eat!
3. Make about 12 round balls and flatten them into cakes about 1/2" high. Place them on a greased cookie sheet or, if you have it, a greased iron skillet.
4. Bake them in your oven at 375° for about 30 minutes, or until golden brown. Serve warm--we especially recommend them with butter and honey!
5. For johnnycakes, start by mixing the "dry" ingredients--cornmeal, salt, and sugar. Then stir in the boiling water.

6. Mix until the batter is quite thick, and then spoon it into pancake-sized rounds on a well-greased frying pan. Fry until the bottom is golden brown, and then flip.
7. When both sides are golden brown, the "johnnycake" is ready to eat. (Note: if you want thinner cakes, just add more water).
8. Serve hot with maple syrup and butter...or, if you're adventurous, a little molasses!
9. To make spoon bread, preheat your oven to 425 before you start mixing.
10. As the oven is warming, choose an earthenware or baking dish, place your butter into it, and place it in the oven until the dish is hot and the butter is fully melted.
11. Meanwhile, mix the cornmeal and salt, add the boiling water, and beat with a whisk until the mixture is smooth. Then stir in the milk and add the eggs.
12. Whisk them all together thoroughly to avoid lumps. At the very end, stir in the melted butter, and pour the whole mixture into your hot baking dish.
13. Bake 25-30 minutes and serve warm. For an extra-flavorful touch, serve with butter and honey or maple syrup!

© Copyright 2006-2012 Education.com All Rights Reserved.