



JOHNNYCAKES RECIPE

Johnnycakes are the New England equivalent of tortillas, as they are a cornmeal flat bread. The simplest recipes call for nothing but cornmeal, boiling water, and a little salt. The batter should be fairly thin so that when fried on a hot griddle, the batter is no more than a quarter of an inch thick.

Johnnycake History:

Johnnycakes, johnny cakes, jonnycake, ashcake, battercake, corn cake, cornpone, hoecake, hoe cake, journey cake, mush bread, pone, Shawnee cake, jonakin, and jonikin. These are all regional names for this cornmeal flatbread.

The origin of the name johnnycakes (jonnycakes) is something of a mystery and probably has nothing to do with the name John. They were also called journey cakes because they could be carried on long trips in saddlebags and baked along the way. Some historians think that they were originally called Shawnee cakes and that the colonists slurred the words, pronouncing it as johnnycakes. Historians also think that “janiken,” an American Indian word meant “corn cake,” could possibly be the origin.

The settlers of New England learned how to make johnnycakes from the local Pawtuxet Indians, who showed the starving Pilgrims how to grind and use corn for eating. When the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth in 1620, most of their wheat brought from England had spoiled on the long voyage. It is said that Myles Standish (1584-1656), the military leader of the Plymouth Colony, discovered a cache of corn stored by the Indians.

An Indian named Tisquantum (1585-1622), also known as Squanto, was helpful in the settlers’ survival during the winter of 1621. Tisquantum was one of five Indians taken to England in 1605 by Captain John Weymouth, who was employed by Sir Ferdinando Gorges of the Plymouth Company and set out to discover the Northwest Passage. In 1614, Tisquantum was brought back to America, assisting some of Gorges’ men in mapping the New England coast. Tisquantum lived out the rest of his life in the Plymouth Colony teaching the settlers how to grow corn, pound corn into meal, and how to cook with it. He also acted as interpreter and guide.

Johnnycake Recipe:

Prep Time

10 mins

Total Time

10 mins

Course: Breakfast

Cuisine: American

Keyword: Johnnycake History, Johnnycake Recipe

Servings: [4](#) servings

Ingredients

- 1 cup white cornmeal
- 3/4 teaspoon [salt](#)
- 1 cup water
- 1/2 cup milk
- Bacon drippings

Instructions

1. In a medium bowl, place cornmeal and salt.
2. In a medium saucepan over high heat, bring water to a rapid boil; remove from heat. With the saucepan in one hand, let the boiling water dribble onto the cornmeal while stirring constantly with the other hand. Then stir the milk into the mixture (it will be fairly thick, but not runny).
3. Generously grease a large, heavy frying pan (I like to use my [cast-iron frying pan](#)) with the bacon drippings and heat. When pan is hot, drop the batter by spoonfuls. Flatten the batter with a spatula to a thickness of approximately 1/4 inch. Fry until golden brown, turn, and brown on the other side (adding more bacon drippings as needed).
4. Serve hot with butter, maple syrup, or applesauce.
5. Makes 4 servings.

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