

RHODE ISLAND JOHNNY CAKES

SOUTH COUNTY STYLE, which are thick

- 1 cup Kenyon's White Corn Meal
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 1 ¼ cups boiling water

Place dry ingredients in bowl and mix thoroughly. Gradually add boiling water until desired consistency. Drop on a well greased, medium hot griddle (380°) by the spoonful, and cook for about 6 minutes each side, until brown.

NEWPORT STYLE, which are thin and crisp

- 1 cup Kenyon's White Corn Meal
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 1 ¾ cups milk

Put all ingredients in bowl, mix thoroughly, and cook on a well greased, hot griddle, as you would griddle cakes. Add extra milk if necessary to keep mixture thin. Some prefer to omit sugar.

Recipe Suggestions:

- ☞ Serve Johnnycakes in place of potatoes for a delightful change.
- ☞ Serve Creamed Chipped Beef or Chicken a la King over Johnny cakes instead of toast for a tasty lunch or supper.
- ☞ For a wonderful, unique flavor, use Kenyon's Corn Meal as a breading for fish and chicken, as you would with flour or bread crumbs.

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The Johnny Cake Tradition

By W.L. Watson

The Pilgrims landed at Plymouth in bleak November, 1620, and we all know of the privations of that first terrible winter. The wheat they had brought from England had all spoiled during their long voyage. One thing that saved many lives was the discovery by Miles Standish of a cache where the Indians had stored some of their harvest of corn. This grain was unknown to them but Squanto, a Putuxet Indian who was friendly toward them, taught them how to pound the corn into a meal with a crude mortar and pestle and then how to mix it with water into a stiff dough which was spread on a small flat surface and stood before an open fire and cooked into a sort of cake, and here we have the real original johnny-cake; corn meal cooked in various forms, became their main item of food.

But our ancestors, while they could not improve the corn itself, did improve upon the methods of grinding the corn, and soon wind mills, and later water powered mills were erected for the sole purpose of grinding corn. The result was a great improvement and corn meal soon became the principal article of food. Not only did they improve the grinding of the meal but they invented many new dishes and in old letters and diaries we find references to stir-about, Indian pudding, Indian dumplings, toads and many other almost forgotten dishes. But with all their inventive genius they never invented a dish that could equal that which the Indians taught them to make, although they did improve and refine it, namely, the Rhode Island Jonny Cake.

Millers have always taken a great pride in the product of their mill, each thinking that his meal was the best. This rivalry was also shared by those having corn to grind, and they might travel many miles to go to a certain mill, when there was one a stone's throw from their home. This rivalry among millers has come down through the ages to the present.

A delicacy of the Indians

Jonnycakes can be served without butter. Try a slight drizzle of Coffee Syrup, OR Honey, OR Molasses. Drizzle a small amount of Molasses on the platter; a fine squiggle will do. Put the cakes on the platter; then drizzle some honey on the tops. Serve warm.

Avoid serving butter and maple syrup on a hot Jonnycake to first-time eaters, particularly to children, as the taste and texture may surprise or disappoint someone who is expecting a “pancake”. Serve that first cake just plain and be sure to call it “Journey Bread” or “Corn Bread”. Dress it up, later.

Other Recipes:

CHOCOLATE JONNYCAKES

This is really a two batter recipe.

Part I

In a small bowl or cup:

½ cup of KENYON’S CORN MUFFIN MIX

To this dry mix add a small amount of water OR milk OR root beer (yes, root beer) - just a small amount, increase as needed, and mix with back of spoon to form a smooth batter - not too thick - not too loose. Set aside.

Part II

Put 5 or 6 Jonnycakes on the griddle and let them cook for a while, but do NOT turn them over at this time - instead, place a chocolate nonpareil on top of each cake. Work quickly and cook only a few cakes at a time so the chocolate doesn’t melt right away. Place an ice tea spoonful of the CORN MUFFIN batter on top, covering the nonpareil. NOW turn - carefully - so the cake doesn’t slide. Practice this step before calling in the neighbors. Remove to a platter when the muffin side is brown and before chocolate oozes out.

This one is really great with coffee syrup drizzled on top. No need for the butter. Then sprinkle a few taps of powdered sugar tapped through a fine sieve. We always used the old tea strainer.

SOUTHWEST STYLE

In a small bowl mix:

1 cup Corn Muffin Mix

1 egg

1 Tablespoon Corn Oil

1 heaping Tablespoon of left over Sweet Corn

(Drained and optional)

2 large Tablespoons med/hot Salsa

Liquid - use Orange Soda (Slice or Crush)

With back of spoon mix to a thickish pouring consistency (as cake mix).

Place by Tablespoon on to hot griddle.

When almost ready to turn, place a round corn chip on top and push down just slightly, THEN turn over. These can stay on the griddle, chip-side-down, for an extended time without over cooking.

Eating is fun. Sweet - spicy - soft - crunchy - salty - all rolled into one little cake.

Use your imagination and common good cooking sense. Try different combinations of foods that YOU like and then PRACTICE. Serve your creations to friends, listen carefully to their comments, and then make adjustments.

When you have made something interesting, write it down. Make it again and serve it to a different group of friends. Then send a copy to us at the mill.

Thanks for inquiring about some ideas for cooking Rhode Island Jonnycakes. We hope to hear from you soon.

Dick Donnelly

One of Many Rhode Island Jonnycake Makers

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Rhode Island Johnnycakes Basic Recipe

Mix DRY these proportions:

1 cup WHITE STONE GROUND CORN Meal

½ cup dry (powdered) milk

½ teaspoon salt

1 tablespoon sugar

PINCH of ginger OR allspice OR nutmeg OR pumpkin pie spice

1. Gradually add between 1-1 1/2 cups **boiling** water to about 1 cup of your dry “mix”, mixing with the BACK of the spoon until all the meal is moistened, THEN use the bowl of the spoon to continue mixing. You know the consistency is right when there is a loose “plop” of batter off the spoon.
2. Well oil a hot griddle. Use a well “seasoned” cast iron griddle or teflon, or T-fal one. Do not use cast aluminum or the cakes will stick.
3. Spoon batter on to the griddle - one spoonful to a cake. Tap spoon on the griddle to release batter from spoon and to control the SHAPE of the cake. One adjusts the SIZE of the cake by changing the size of the SPOON. (Ice tea spoon - small; tablespoon - larger) Leave cake undisturbed until it becomes brown around the edges and firm - then leave a little longer. Place a few drops of corn oil on top of each cake before turning over. Turn cake over and pat down slightly to keep uniform thickness. This side doesn't need quite so much time to brown. When done remove to platter.
4. Place several large spoonfuls of softened “whipped” butter (found in the dairy case) into a cup. Add some real maple syrup to the butter and mix very well by slicing the butter with the side of the spoon until mixed, and then stirring until smooth and sauce-like. Spread small amounts of this maple butter on each cooked cake at time of serving using the back of the butter spoon as your spreader.
- 5 Eat with the FINGERS and enjoy.

After some practice, the fun begins! Try adding something to the Batter, and try adding something to the butter for an endless variety of delicious combinations. For example:

- ∞ Finely grated Orange Zest in the batter & a splash or two of Grande Marnier in the butter
- ∞ Chopped Shrimp or Lobster in the batter & a squirt of Tobasco Sauce in the butter
- ∞ Finely chopped onion in the batter & a small amount of grated Horseradish in the butter