

COOKING IN THE "GOOD OLD DAYS"

From 'The Heartland' by Nancy Hess
'Rockingham County, VA'

"We hope these old recipes will tell you a little something about our ancestors here in the Valley. Time not space will permit us to elaborate further. Some of the recipes would not be practical for us today – their methods of measuring were not always the same but perhaps one can devise and adapt for ones own use some of these old 'recipes' as they were called.

The heritage of our forefathers should be cherished by us all.

It is because of their foresight and their love of this land that we today enjoy such rich blessings. To our hard working forefathers we owe much gratitude.

Carolyn Wetsel

Pawn Haas (scrapple): 1 hog's head; 4-5 qts. cold water; 4 tsp. salt; 4 tsp. pepper; 1 tsp. powdered sage, yellow corn meal (about 3 cups). Separate one hog's head into halves. Remove eyes and brains. Scrape had and clean thoroughly. Place in a large kettle and cover with 4-5 qts. of cold water. Simmer gently for 2-3 hrs., or until meat falls from bones. Skim grease carefully from surface; remove meat, chop fine and return to liquor. Season with salt, pepper and sage to taste. Sift in corn meal, stirring constantly, until the mixture is thickened to the consistency of soft mush. Cook slowly for 1 hr. over low heat. When sufficiently cooked, pour into greased oblong pans; store in place until ready to use. Cut in thin slices and fry until crisp and brown.

Johnny Cake: 1 pt. Indian meal (corn meal), 1 teacupful of sugar, 1 pt. of milk, 2 eggs, 1 teaspoonful of butter, salt to taste, 1 teaspoonful of dissolved saleratus (baking soda).

Mix the butter and sugar with the meal; boil half the milk. Add the dissolved saleratus and the eggs, after they have been well beaten, to the remaining half of cold milk. Pour the boiling milk over the meal and let it cool. Then add the cold mile and saleratus. Bake in a shallow (8x8) greased pan at 400 degrees for 20 min. or done.

Indian Pudding: 5 cupfuls scalded milk, 1/3 cupful corn-meal, 1/2 cupful molasses, 1 tsp. ginger, 1 tsp. salt, 1/2 tsp. cinnamon.

Pour milk slowly on to corn-meal, cook in double boiler 20 min. Add remaining ingredients. Pour into a greased baking dish, set in pan of hot water and bake at 350 degrees F. for two hrs. Serve with top milk. Serves six.

Cracklin' Bread: Prepare corn bread by using 2 cups of corn meal, 2 tsp. of salt, 1 cup of buttermilk, 1 tsp. of soda, and 1/2 tsp. of baking powder. Mix 1/2 cup of craklin's into mixture. If too dry use some lukewarm water to make the consistency for corn bread and bake as you would corn bread.

Old-Fashioned Corn Meal Mush: 2 cups corn meal; 2 cups cold water; 6 cups boiling water, 2 tsp. salt.

Mix the corn meal with cold water; then stir into the boiling water to which has been added the salt. When thoroughly mixed, cover closely, reduce the heat to the lowest point and let simmer for 30 min. or longer, stirring occasionally to prevent lumping. Then turn off heat and let steam for 30 min. longer without lifting the cover. Serve as hot cereal with milk and sugar, if desired. When allowed to cool, the mush may be sliced and then floured and fried and eaten with syrup to go with breakfast meat.

*A product which we don't find very much any more is stone-ground buckwheat. There is little demand for this, but old-timers who feasted on buckwheat cakes made from scratch do not care much for packaged buckwheat cake mix.

Here is a recipe using this flour which can be found at most health food and other specialty food stores:

Buckwheat Cakes: 1 pkg. dry yeast; ½ cup warm water; 2 tsp. sugar; ½ tsp. salt; 2 tsp. flour; 1 qt. warm water; buckwheat flour; white flour; 1 T sugar; 1 tsp. salt; 1 tsp. soda.

To make starter, sprinkle yeast on ½ c. warm water till soft; then add 2 tsp. sugar, salt and 2 tsp. flour. Let rise until light. In gallon bowl put qt. of warm water, yeast starter, and stir. Add equal parts of buckwheat and white flour (approximately 2 cups each) to make a stiff batter. Let stand overnight. In morning, add sugar, salt and soda, dissolved in 2 TB warm water. Fry on hot griddle. Save 1 pt. for a starter. A little more sugar and soda may need to be added as starter gets older. More shortening needed to fry than other pan cakes.

'Butterless, Eggless, Milkless Cake (Depression Cake): From Janet Downs:

1 lb. raisins	1 tsp. cloves
2 cups water	1 tsp. cinnamon
1 cup cold water	1 tsp. nutmeg
2 cups sugar	4 cups flour
½ cup shortening	1 cup black walnuts (optional)
1 Tbsp. baking soda	

Stew raisins in 2 cups water for 15 minutes. Add remaining ingredients. Mix well. Pour into a greased, floured tube pan. Bake at 350 for 1 hour. (In older recipes, best to use unsifted flour).

I got this recipe from the 1983 Port Republic cookbook. The daughter-in-law of Mrs. Alice "Aunt Peg" Meyerhoeffer (Charlotte Begoon Meyerhoeffer) submitted the recipe, and it is a very old recipe.

In 1983 I submitted this to the cookbook for Memorial Baptist Church in Staunton, VA. Following the publication of the cookbook, some of the cookbooks were at Surratt Tire Center in Staunton. Mrs. Isabel Garber of Staunton saw the cookbook, was leafing through, and saw the recipe for the above cake. She purchased the cookbook, went home, made the cake and gave me a call.

She said her mother always kept this cake in the lower drawer of the kitchen cabinet and when they came home from school, they would have a piece of the cake. Isy is the one that told me they called it, "depression cake."

Isy said that she had looked for many years for this recipe and was really excited when she saw the recipe in the cookbook from Memorial Baptist. Isy and my husband worked together for quite a few years.

Since I discovered this recipe in the Port Republic cookbook, I have seen it in many other cookbooks.

Crutchfield's Southern Corn Bread:

2 cups Crutchfield's corn meal
3 teaspoon baking powder
1 ½ teaspoons salt
2 eggs
1 ½ cups milk
4 tablespoons cooking oil

Preheat oven to 450 degrees F. Heat 2 tablespoons oil in 9-inch square pan or skillet while mixing ingredients. Combine the dry ingredients in a large bowl. Add eggs, milk and remaining cooking oil, stirring until smooth. Pour into the hot pan or skillet and bake 35 to 40 minutes until golden. Makes 6 to 9 servings.