



GUIDING QUESTIONS

How did the johnnycake evolve as a recipe and why?

1. WASH HANDS (5 minutes)

Ask students to wash hands. Divide students into 3 groups and assign each group to a table. Reiterate the safety rules for using the Charlie Cart.



2. INTRODUCE THE LESSON (10 minutes)

Today we are making johnnycakes, a sort of pancake with only four ingredients: water, salt, butter, and cornmeal.

Nobody knows for sure where johnnycakes got their name: Some people say they're really called "journey cakes" because they could last on long trips. Others say they were named "Shawnee cakes" for the native people who taught the Pilgrims how to make them. Johnnycakes give us a look into the past.

Johnnycakes were quick and filling and made with inexpensive ingredients, perhaps from left over "scraps." They were cooked over an open fire on an iron pan or possibly a garden hoe (a sort of shovel), which is where they may have gotten one of their other names, "hoecake."

Throughout history there have been recipes like johnnycakes that come just from what people have on hand—a bit of cornmeal, water from a stream, an open fire, and a garden tool to cook with. Through cleverness and perseverance people made do with very little, and still managed to create a dish that we enjoy today, hundreds of years later.

Now we'll get started making our johnnycakes. I have prepared the dough ahead of time. As you make these corn cakes, reflect on life long ago. What might it have been like to prepare and cook these cakes at night, over an open fire?

3. MAKE JOHNNYCAKES (30 minutes)

- At each table, distribute the dough.
- To make the cakes equal in size, and to ensure they will all fit on the griddle in one batch, instruct students to cut the roll in half, then in half again, and continue until they have 16 pieces per table.
- Students should now each have a small piece of dough. Roll the dough into a ball, the size of a large marble. It is not possible to overwork this dough. Students can make shapes and reroll it several times.
- Place the ball on a clean cutting mat or a piece of parchment.
- Use a $\frac{1}{3}$ -cup or $\frac{1}{4}$ -cup measure to flatten the dough. Holding the cup by the handle, press the bottom down gently onto the dough. Dough rounds should be about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thick and the diameter of the bottom of the measuring cup.
- Assign one student from each table to bring dough rounds to the cart when ready to cook.

COOK JOHNNYCAKES

- Heat griddle to 350°F or medium-high heat. After 2 minutes, spread butter—about 1 tablespoon per batch—over the griddle with a spatula.
- Cook dough rounds in one batch, approximately 2 minutes per side, or until crisp and slightly browned. Add more butter to griddle, as needed.

4. EAT AND DISCUSS (10 minutes)

Clean and set tables to eat. Serve johnnycakes warm with topping of choice.

Ask students to put their extra johnnycake dough in a ziplock bag to take home.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What do johnnycakes tell us about life long ago?

Can you think of other recipes from long ago that we still eat today?

5. CLEAN UP (5 minutes)

SEASON: **WINTER**

MAKES: **ABOUT 16 (2 INCH) JOHNNY CAKES**

INGREDIENTS

Note: Use organics whenever possible.

1 cup water

1 cup cornmeal (preferably stone-ground)

¼ teaspoon kosher salt

2 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened

Honey or jam, for topping

PREPARATION

1. Boil the water.
2. Combine the cornmeal and salt in a mixing bowl. Stir to blend.
3. With a wooden spoon, mix the boiled water into the cornmeal and stir to combine. Let rest 10 minutes. (If boiled water is not available, use cold water, and let rest 30 minutes or more.)
4. Mix in 1 tablespoon of the softened butter. With clean hands, gather the dough into a ball and knead until smooth.
5. Roll the dough into a log about 2 inches in diameter. Slice off 1-inch pieces. Roll each piece into a ball the size of a large marble.
6. Place the piece of dough on a clean cutting mat or parchment paper.
7. Use a ⅓-cup or ¼-cup measure to flatten the dough. Holding the measuring cup by the handle, press the bottom down gently onto the dough. Dough rounds should be about ⅜ inch thick and the diameter of the bottom of the measuring cup.
8. Heat a griddle or skillet over medium-high heat. After 2 minutes, spread ¾ tablespoon butter on the griddle with a spatula. Cook the dough rounds in one batch, approximately 2 minutes per side, or until crispy and lightly browned. Adjust timing depending on the thickness of the dough. Add the remaining butter to the griddle as needed for cooking.

Serve warm, topped with honey or jam.