



Maple Bacon Cornbread

I seriously don't know anyone who doesn't freak out over good cornbread. Personally I only know one way to make it: in a cast iron skillet. This is my decadent, over-the-top take on the classic. I often call it "breakfast cornbread"

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 15-20 minutes

Equipment:

- 10-inch cast iron skillet
- 2 medium bowls
- 1 small bowl
- Rubber spatula
- Pastry brush

What you need:

For the bread:

1 pound of bacon
1 cup cornmeal
1 cup all purpose flour
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar
2 tsp baking powder
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp baking soda
1 tsp kosher salt
1 cup buttermilk
 $\frac{1}{2}$ stick of butter
2 eggs
2 tbsp maple syrup
Vegetable or canola oil, about 1 tbs

For the glaze:

1 tbs maple syrup
1 tbs butter

To make:

Turn your oven to 425°.

While your oven heats, fry the bacon on the stovetop in the skillet until well-browned, then move to a paper-towel lined plate to cool. Drain the bacon grease from your pan into a heat-proof bowl and set aside. Wipe out your skillet with a paper towel, then place it on the center rack of your oven. While the oven and skillet heat, prepare your bread batter.

First, get your $\frac{1}{2}$ stick of butter in a small bowl and in the microwave – melt completely and let it cool while you prepare the rest of the bread. Place the cornmeal, flour, sugar, baking powder, soda, and salt in a medium bowl and stir with whisk to combine. In another bowl combine the buttermilk, eggs, and maple syrup, and whisk thoroughly. While whisking, drizzle in cooled melted butter until ingredients are completely combined. Then, pour the

wet ingredients onto the dry ingredients and whisk until the batter just comes together. Once the batter is mixed, add in 1 tablespoon of the reserved bacon grease and stir in. Then, take the cooked bacon and use your kitchen scissors or a knife to cut it into bite-size chunks. When all the bacon is cut, toss it in the bowl and fold it into the batter.

Now, open the door to your oven and pull the rack out enough to be able to get at your roaring hot skillet – do not remove it, just keep in on the rack (and be careful!!!). Pour in a splash of oil and, using a pot holder, tilt the pan to coat. Take your batter and use the spatula to pour all of it into the hot skillet. Slide the rack back in, close the door, and let it bake - check it at 15 minutes. The goal is for the bread to be golden brown on top and spring back when pressed, that is, it should not be soupy or jiggly in the middle, but you also don't want to overcook it. If it's not done after 15 minutes, let it keep baking and continue to check it every minute or so until finished. It could take as long as 20 minutes.

Once done, remove the skillet from the oven. Immediately turn the bread onto a platter or dish or cutting board or whatever. Now prepare the glaze. Place the butter and maple syrup into a small bowl and microwave for 30 seconds or until butter is melted and syrup is warm and thin. Stir to combine. Brush the glaze onto the hot bread using the pastry brush.

Allow a few minutes for the glaze to settle and glisten. Cut the bread as desired and serve piping hot with butter. Mmmmm.

Tips

- Don't make this when you're home alone. You will eat the whole skillet. It's not pretty.
- If you want to make this recipe a little more mainstream, you can just leave out the bacon and bacon grease entirely. You can also substitute honey for maple syrup. You can also add more melted butter. Mmm.