



ANSON MILLS

Blue Corn Johnnycakes

Yield

12 to 15 (4- to 5-inch) johnnycakes

Time

10 minutes to make the batter, 20 minutes to cook all the cakes

Cooking Remarks

This batter is unleavened and will—indeed *should*—appear alarmingly thin. So, remember: the batter is thin and the griddle hot. If the griddle is hot enough, the batter will run out quickly into a wide, thin circle, the hot surface gripping and stopping the batter in its tracks. Once on the griddle, watch the color of the cornmeal on the uncooked side: it will turn from dusty mauve to deep purple as it cooks. Don't turn the cake until its surface becomes dry on the edges. As you cook the cakes, you may want to thin the remaining batter with additional warm milk.

Equipment Mise en Place

For this recipe, you will need a medium mixing bowl, a digital kitchen scale, a wooden spoon, a small whisk, a well-seasoned 10-inch cast-iron griddle or skillet, a small saucepan, a small bowl, a heatproof basting brush, a 2-ounce ladle, and a metal spatula.

Ingredients

5.5 ounces (1¼ cups) Anson Mills Native Fine Blue Cornmeal

3 ounces (1 cup) dried blueberries

½ teaspoon fine sea salt

Boiling spring or filtered water

3 ounces (6 tablespoons) unsalted butter, plus additional for serving

4 ounces (½ cup) whole milk, warmed slightly

Softened butter for serving

Dark amber maple syrup, warmed, for serving

Directions

1. Turn the cornmeal, blueberries, and salt into a medium bowl. Set the bowl on a digital kitchen scale, tare the weight, and pour 7 ounces of boiling water into the cornmeal. Stir with a wooden spoon utensil to moisten the ingredients. The cornmeal should be a soft paste, in no way fluid. Cover the bowl and set it aside.

2. Set a well-seasoned 10-inch cast-iron griddle or skillet over medium-low heat to become hot while you finish the batter. The griddle will need to be hotter than it is for ordinary pancakes. Remember: thin batter, hot pan.

3. Melt the butter in a small saucepan over low heat. Remove it from the heat, tilt the pan, and part the surface foam with a spoon. Spoon off 2 tablespoons of clear yellow butterfat into a small bowl and set it aside for greasing the griddle. Stir 3 tablespoons of the remaining butter into the bowl with the hot cornmeal and stir with a wooden spoon to combine. The paste will be soft and shiny. Discard the remaining watery butter. Whisk the milk into the mush. The batter will be quite thin compared to an average pancake batter, perilously close to runny. Let it stand for 5 minutes or so.

4. Dip a heatproof basting brush in the clarified butter and brush it across the surface of the hot griddle. Using a 2-ounce ladle, spoon batter onto the griddle; you should be able to cook 3 johnnycakes at a time. Let the batter drop onto the griddle from the ladle *without* rotating your wrist or using the ladle to draw a circle. If the griddle is hot enough the batter will run and spread itself into a round 4 to 5 inches in diameter. When the unbaked side of each cake has turned dark purple and is becoming dry to the touch, 1½ to 2 minutes, flip the cake with a metal spatula, and cook the other side until set, about 1 minute longer. Transfer the johnnycakes to a baking sheet set in a warm oven to keep them hot while you cook the next batch, or simply give them to someone to eat. Grease the griddle with butter before cooking the next batch. Thin the batter with additional warm milk if necessary. Serve the johnnycakes hot with butter and warm maple syrup.