

Three survival breads you can make from scratch

I've been a prepper for quite some time now, but I've been an outdoor enthusiast since I was a young boy. Even today, my favorite pastime is being somewhere far from society, surrounded by nature and the tranquility it offers.

One thing I've learned from my 30 years of outdoor adventures is that nothing beats a good meal when you're far away from civilization. A hot meal provides a great morale boost and helps you recharge your batteries, so to speak. I've experimented with various cooking methods and combined ingredients to make all sorts of dishes. However, survival bread is one of the foods I always make, no matter what.

If you want to learn how to make survival bread, the first thing to understand is that these breads are designed to be made with minimal ingredients and are not meant to be fancy foods. Their primary purpose is to be served in various situations, especially during disasters or while camping with limited resources. Each survival bread recipe excels in different areas, but all can be stored long-term in a sealed container or bag and are an important source of carbohydrates in your diet.

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For centuries, survival breads have been made and consumed by

numerous cultures. Today, these historically significant breads have somewhat lost their original purpose and are now included in various culinary occasions.

So, today I'll share my favorite survival breads and teach you how to make them. There are only a few basic ingredients required to make any type of bread you can think of. To make simple survival bread, you'll need the following ingredients: flour, baking powder, salt (optional), oil (optional, enhances flavor), sugar (optional, enhances flavor), and water.

Survival breads:

Bannock

Bannock bread is a traditional flatbread with roots tracing back to the Indigenous people of North America as well as Scottish settlers. Bannock was a simple, versatile bread made from available ingredients, which made it a staple in survival situations, particularly during hunting trips or times when resources were limited.

Historically, bannock was made with barley, oats, or flour, and could be cooked over an open fire. In North America, Indigenous people adapted this bread to include ingredients like corn and wild grains, while Scottish settlers brought their own versions made primarily with wheat flour. Today, bannock remains a popular bread among preppers and survivalists due to its simplicity and ability to be cooked in various ways, from pan-frying to baking or roasting over a campfire.

Ingredients and Instructions

Ingredients:

- 2 cups all-purpose flour (you can also use whole wheat

or oat flour)

- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cup oil, butter, or lard (optional for added flavor)
- 3/4 cup water (adjust as needed)

Instructions:

1. Start by mixing the dry ingredients in a large bowl. Combine the flour, baking powder, salt and stir together until evenly mixed.

2. You can add lard, oil, or butter to the dry ingredients to enhance the flavor of the bread. Use your hand or a fork to mix everything until it resembles coarse crumbs. This step can be skipped if you want to make the simpler version of Bannock.

3. Add water gradually to the dry ingredients mixing well. You will need to add water little by little until a soft dough forms. The dough should be sticky but not too wet. Don't worry if the dough is too wet since you can add more flour as needed.

4. Use a flat surface to knead the dough. Sprinkle some flour on the surface and knead the dough for a minute or two until it comes together. If you knead the dough too much it will make the bread tough.

5. Now flatten the dough into a thick disc, about 1/2 inch thick. You can also divide it into smaller portions for individual servings.

For cooking the Bannock bread, you can use the following methods:

1. The Pan-Fried Method – Heat a skillet or frying pan over ambers or open flame and grease it lightly with lard, oil or butter. Place the dough in the pan and cook for 5-7 minutes on each side until golden brown. The cooking time may be longer

depending on how hot the fire is. Make sure to check that the inside is cooked through by inserting a fork or a toothpick/stick.

2. The Campfire Method – For the more traditional method, wrap the dough around a thick stick (remove the bark with your knife) and hold it over an open flame. Rotate it every few minutes to cook all sides evenly until golden and cooked through.

You can eat bannock plain, but from experience, I can tell you it's delicious when served with butter, jam, honey, or alongside a hearty stew. When berries are in season, I gather some and make a mush that I spread over a piece of bannock—it's wonderful. The bread is best eaten fresh but can be stored in a sealed container for up to a week.

Frybread

I always start with bannock when I'm teaching people how to make survival bread. However, this recipe is the one directly following the bannock recipe. Frybread is a traditional Native American dish with a rich yet somber history. It originated from the U.S. government's forced relocation of Native American tribes during the 19th century, particularly during the era of the "Long Walk" when the Navajo people were displaced from their lands.

The government provided rations of flour, sugar, salt, and lard, which were not traditional ingredients in Indigenous diets. In response, Native American communities created frybread as a means of survival, using these limited resources.

Over time, frybread has evolved into a cherished cultural food, served at family gatherings, and various celebrations. Frybread is soft and fluffy on the inside, with a crisp, golden exterior, making it both versatile and comforting. I

learned to make frybread at a young age from a close friend of mine with Native American roots.

Ingredients and Instructions

Ingredients:

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 to 1 cup warm water (or milk for a richer texture)
- Oil for frying (vegetable or canola oil works well)

Instructions:

1. In a large bowl, combine the flour, baking powder, and salt. Mix these dry ingredients to distribute the baking powder evenly through the flour.

2. Slowly add the warm water (or milk) to the dry ingredients, mixing it in with your hands or a spoon. Add enough liquid until the dough comes together into a soft, slightly sticky ball. If the dough is too wet, add a small amount of flour.

3. Turn the dough onto a lightly floured surface and knead it gently for a minute or two until it becomes smooth. Let the dough rest for about 10-15 minutes, covered with a clean piece of cloth. This resting period makes the dough easier to shape and fry.

4. You can divide the dough into 6 equal portions (or more, depending on how large you want the frybread). Flatten each portion into a round disc about 1/4 inch thick. After you try this recipe a few times, you will make them smaller or larger depending on your preference.

5. Heat about 2 inches of oil in a deep skillet or frying pan over a heat source. The oil should reach around 350°F. To test

if it's the oil is ready, drop a small piece of dough into it and it should sizzle and float to the top.

6. Carefully place one or two pieces of dough into the hot oil (or more, depending on the size of your pan). Fry each piece for 3 minutes on each side, or until they turn golden brown and puff up. Use a fork or tongs (if available) to flip them. I usually place just two or three pieces of dough in the frying pan because I don't want to overcrowd the pan. If you place more pieces, the oil temperature will drop and affect frying.

7. When your frybread turns golden and crispy, you can remove them from the oil and drain them. Repeat the frying process with the remaining dough.

I usually eat frybread with beans and various meats, but it can be served with various dishes. You can even turn it into a sweet treat if you sprinkle the frybread with powdered sugar or if you put honey over the top.

Ash Cakes

Ash cakes, also known as ash bread, are a simple type of flatbread traditionally baked directly in the ashes of a fire. This method of cooking dates back to ancient times and has been used by various cultures around the world. In North America, the Cherokee made ash cakes from ground cornmeal or other grains. Early European settlers and frontiersmen also adopted this method for its practicality in survival situations.

Ash cakes were and still are a staple food for those living off the land or traveling through the wilderness since they require minimal ingredients and can be made quickly.

Ingredients and Instructions

Ingredients:

- 1 cup cornmeal (or flour)
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- Water (enough to form a dough)

Optional: fat or oil (for flavor)

Instructions:

1. Build a small campfire and let it burn until you have only hot embers with a minimal flame. The ash bread will be cooked directly on the glowing coals and not on the flames.
2. Combine the cornmeal and salt in a bowl. Stir until the salt is evenly distributed. If you prefer, you can add a little oil or melted fat to the mixture for extra flavor and richness.
3. Slowly add water to the cornmeal mixture, stirring as you go. Make sure you add just enough water to bring the ingredients together into a thick, dough-like consistency. The dough should be firm but pliable, not too sticky or runny.
4. Once the dough is ready, shape and divide it into small portions. Flatten each portion into a thin disc, about 1/4 inch thick. Ash cakes are usually small, but you can adjust the size depending on your preference.
5. Remove any large pieces of burning wood, leaving a smooth bed of glowing embers. You can place the cakes directly on the coals or wrap them in green leaves for added protection and flavor. Make sure you correctly identify the plant before using its leaves to avoid poisoning yourself or those who eat the bread.
6. Place the dough discs directly onto the hot ashes or

embers. Cook for about 5 to 10 minutes, flipping once halfway through, until the cakes are firm and have a slightly crispy exterior. As the name implies the cakes may pick up some ash on the surface, but you can brush it off once they're done.

7. Some people are uncomfortable cooking directly in the ashes, so if you're one of them, you can place the dough on a heated rock near the fire or in a cast-iron skillet over low heat. Both methods will give you a similar result without direct contact with the ashes. Note: Make sure the rock you are using is not a porous one and doesn't contain water, otherwise it will explode.

8. The ash cakes are ready when they are firm to the touch and golden brown on both sides. They should have a slightly crisp outside and a soft interior.

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Ash cakes are typically served plain, but they pair well with many ingredients such as butter, honey, and jam, or stews. They're best eaten fresh, but they can also be stored for two or three days if wrapped in a cloth or stored in a container. I've stored them for longer, but I always recommend eating them as fresh as possible.

Concluding

So, there you have it, my top 3 survival breads that can be easily made regardless of the environment you find yourself

in. I highly recommend you make these breads and look for alternative recipes online that enhance the flavor and texture of these breads. You will be surprised how easy it is to make these breads and how good they taste.