INDIRECT · EASY

# Cornbread in an Iron Skillet on the Kamado, with Brown Butter

*Cornbread is a spoon-and-knife cornmeal bread: tender crumb, crunchy crust and brown butter. Here it bakes in an iron skillet preheated inside the kamado, indirect at about 200 °C.*



| PREP | COOK | SERVINGS | TEMPERATURE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 20 min | 45 min | 8 | 200 °C |

## Ingredients

- **200 g** fine cornmeal (not pre-cooked polenta)
- **120 g** plain wheat flour
- **2 cdta** baking powder
- **0.5 cdta** bicarbonate of soda
- **1 cdta** fine salt
- **2 cda** sugar (optional)
- **350 ml** buttermilk, or 250 g plain yoghurt loosened with 100 ml milk
- **2 ud** medium eggs, at room temperature
- **90 g** unsalted butter, for browning

## Method

1 LIGHT AND SET THE DEFLECTOR

Fill the firebox with charcoal and light it. When the coals catch, fit the deflector and the grate, and put the empty iron skillet in the centre. Bring the chamber to about 200 °C with the bottom vent open about two fingers and the top vent at half. Let it settle 15-20 minutes with the lid closed so the iron heats right through.

2 BROWN THE BUTTER

While the kamado settles, melt the 90 g of butter in a small pan over medium heat, stirring, until it stops foaming and smells of hazelnut, about 5 minutes. Take it off the heat at once, because it goes from browned to burnt in seconds. Set 2 tablespoons aside in a separate bowl for the skillet and let the rest cool a little.

3 MIX THE DRY INGREDIENTS

In a large bowl combine the cornmeal, wheat flour, baking powder, bicarbonate, salt and sugar. Whisk to aerate and spread the raising agents evenly. Make a well in the centre.

4 MIX THE WET AND COMBINE

In another bowl whisk the buttermilk with the eggs and, still whisking, add the cooled brown butter (the part you did not set aside). Pour it all into the well of the dry mix and fold with a spatula just until no dry pockets remain, ten or twelve strokes. The batter is thick but pourable and slightly uneven. Work it more and the crumb turns rubbery. Rest it for 5 minutes while the iron finishes heating.

5 BURP THE LID AND CHECK THE IRON

Burp the lid: lift it about 5 cm, wait about 5 seconds, then open fully with your face turned away. Straight away, aim the infrared thermometer at the base of the skillet without taking it off the grate. Look for a reading around 190-220 °C; it is indicative, because bright metal reflects and reads low. If it reads much lower, close the lid, wait another 5 minutes and burp again before reopening.

6 POUR THE BATTER INTO THE HOT SKILLET

With gloves on, take the skillet out and set it on a heat-proof board, since the handle is at chamber temperature, and close the kamado lid so you do not lose heat. Add the 2 tablespoons of reserved butter, swirl to coat the base and sides, and pour in the batter in one go: it should sizzle. Burp the lid again and return the skillet to the centre of the grate.

7 BAKE WITH THE LID CLOSED

Close the lid and check that the chamber returns to 200 °C, adjusting the vents little by little. Bake 20-25 minutes without opening in the first 15. It is done when the edges pull away, the surface is golden and a toothpick comes out dry from the centre. If the top browns too fast, close the top vent slightly.

8 REST AND SERVE

Open with burping and gloves, take out the skillet and leave it 5 minutes on a board. Run a knife round the edge and turn out onto a rack, or serve straight from the skillet. Close both vents fully to put out the coals. Cut into wedges and serve warm, with butter if you like.

## Editor's tips

- The skillet really must go in hot. If the batter does not sizzle when poured, the crust will be pale and stick: better to wait 5 more minutes with the lid closed than to bake on lukewarm iron.
- Do not overmix. Ten or twelve strokes of the spatula are enough; small lumps vanish in the bake, and every extra stroke develops gluten and toughens the crumb.
- If the chamber overshoots 220 °C, the base toasts before the centre sets. Close the bottom vent a little at a time, as the temperature control guide describes, and do not open the lid to cool it: air gets in and the coals flare up.
- Leftover cornbread keeps wrapped at room temperature for a day, and reheated in a pan with a little butter it gets its crust back. Next-day squares toasted in butter are among the best there is.

## Gear for this recipe

### De Buyer 5130.28: 28 cm iron skillet with stainless handle

*This is the pan for the recipe: a 28 cm iron pan 2.5-3 mm thick that preheats on the grate so the batter lands on metal at about 200 °C and the crust turns out crisp. The de Buyer has a stainless steel handle and its listing marks it as oven safe. Honest drawback: it weighs about 2 kg, is hand-wash only, and the handle also reaches chamber temperature, so it has to come out with gloves.*

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/de-buyer-sarten-hierro-mango-inox-28

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### Inkbird INK-IFT01: surface infrared thermometer up to 550 °C

*It tells you whether the iron is ready before the batter goes in, without touching it. The Inkbird IFT01 reads from -50 to 550 °C, with a 12:1 distance-to-spot ratio, accuracy of 2% or 2 °C and adjustable emissivity from 0.1 to 1.0. Drawback: it reads surfaces only, never internal temperature, and bright metal reflects and gives low readings, so adjust the emissivity and take the figure as a guide.*

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/inkbird-termometro-infrarrojo-ift01

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### Kamado Bono Media 51 cm

*The recipe needs a kamado that holds a steady 200 °C with the deflector in for close to an hour, with room for a 28 cm skillet and its handle. The Kamado Bono Media measures 51 cm according to its listing and is sold as a bundle with a deflector included, so it can bake indirect from day one. Honest drawback: it weighs about 90 kg and, with the skillet's long handle, it is worth testing the fit cold before lighting.*

mikamado.es/en/kamados/kamado-bono-media-51

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### Jealous Devil 100% White Quebracho lump charcoal 15.8 kg

*A good hour of kamado at a steady 200 °C calls for charcoal that does not burn away quickly or fill the firebox with ash. Jealous Devil is 100% quebracho blanco lump charcoal, a very dense wood, and its listing credits it with little ash (around 3%) and a neutral aroma that does not get into the bread. Drawback: it tends to run hotter than supermarket charcoal, so creep up to 200 °C slowly; whatever has not burned goes out when you close the vents and can be reused.*

mikamado.es/en/accesorios/jealous-devil-quebracho-lump-charcoal

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Full recipe at: mikamado.es/en/recetas/pan-de-maiz-cornbread-sarten-hierro-kamado

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