

The Survival Foods And Gardening Section

CORN AND BEANS, THE WONDER FOODS

by **Kurt Saxon**

Corn and beans have been staple foods for thousands of years. Those American Indians who farmed grew corn, beans and squash as the main elements of their diets. All three are easy to grow, are very productive, filling and nutritious. In fact, one could live on these three foods, and many have had to.

While researching this article I talked to many Southerners who remembered corn and beans as their mainstays as children during the Great Depression. Cornbread and cornmeal mush and beans were always there, regardless of their poverty, and they thrived!

If you have a supply of corn and beans you'll never hunger. Moreover, they taste good. They can also be mixed with any other food, adding bulk and flavor to the most humble meal.

To utilize corn you must buy it in 50 pound sacks for about \$3.50 from your local feed and seed store. You'll also need a Corona Grain Mill. I sell them as a convenience to my readers since I make more profit selling only two books and books are so much easier to package and mail. So this is no hard-sell. I'm doing you a favor because I want you to own a mill. The mill will be among your most important survival tools.

When you get your corn, transfer it to two liter pop bottles, plastic bags, gallon jars, etc., as weevils will come from all over to eat it.

Don't bother trying to sprout the corn as it's most likely hybrid and so only about one grain out of ten will sprout and the rest will only rot.



GRINDING CORN

With my Corona Grain Mill I can grind a pound of whole corn in five minutes. I put the pound in the hopper and set the screws to a very coarse grind which only cracks the kernels

into five or six pieces each.

Then I adjust the screws a little tighter to grind the pieces finer. Then again and again and once again. This makes grinding easy.

Since most recipes take a pound or less, grinding by the pound insures freshness. Of course, you can grind several pounds at a time but that's work. If you set up your mill permanently in a place of its own. you can grind routinely with no thought of time consumption or hard work.

GRINDING SCREEN

A way I came up with to make the grinding easier is a box screen. This is a four-sided, bottomless box of 1 by 4 inch wood. Mine is 12 by 12 inches. I used regular nylon window screen as that's as fine as any bread flour or corn-meal needs to be. I simply spread GOOP glue generously on the rim and pressed the screen on.

I put a section of newspapers under the grinder head and put the screen on the newspaper and under the grinder head. After each grinding stage I shook the finer meal through the screen onto the newspaper and then transferred it into a bowl. This saved sending the finer meal back through the grinder.

You can also use the screen for anything else, as the GOOP gives the screen a permanent and strong bond to the wood. **CORNMEAL MUSH**

Your first project should be cornmeal mush. Consider, as you read, how cheap and simple it is to make. The best way to cook cornmeal mush is in a Crock-Pot. They cost about \$20.00 at Wal-Mart or most other stores. They last forever and use only about 10 cents electricity in 24 hours. They cook slowly and will not burn the contents. You can start a batch of whatever before leaving for work and when you get home you'll have a fully-cooked hot meal waiting. The instruction booklet shows you how to do all your cooking in a Crock-Pot, cheaply and great-tasting. Get one! **CROCK POT**



Without a Crock-Pot you need a double boiler. Corn will stick hard over direct heat and so you must not cook it over direct heat.

A double boiler is simply two pots, the bottom one filled with water and the top holding whatever you don't want direct heat applied to. You can get

double boilers cheaply at Wal-Mart, Sears, etc.. but a Crock-Pot is best.

But say you have a Crock-Pot. Put in 5 and half cups of cold water and pour in and stir 2 cups of cornmeal and a tablespoon of salt. You can add whatever spices or herbs you like for flavor or leave it plain. Turn the Crock-Pot on high and put on the lid. Then let it cook for 3 hours.

After one hour stir it well with a table knife and scrape off any cornmeal sticking to the sides, as that's where the heating elements usually are. Cornmeal does stick slightly in a Crock-Pot, but it's easily scraped off.

After the second hour give it another stir and scrape and let it alone. After the third hour, scrape and stir again and pour the mush out into a greased or Teflon-coated bread baking pan.

Let it alone for a few hours or overnight. It will then be set firm and you can turn it out on a plate. Then cut off quarter-inch slices and fry it golden brown and serve it with whatever else you have. It tastes good, is nutritious and filling.

Instead of plain cornmeal mush you can make scrapple. That's simply the mush with meat scraps chopped up and mixed with the cornmeal during the cooking.

You can't beat the economy of cornmeal mush. At 7 cents a pound for cornmeal ground yourself, 2 cups or 10 ounces costs about 4 cents.. What you get when it sets is just over 3-1/2 pounds of food for about two cents a pound!

CORNBREAD



Now for cornbread. This is delicious and Southerners love it. It's among the simplest breads to make. It's baked in a greased or teflon-coated pan about two inches deep and 8x10 Inches or round in an iron skillet.

It's cut into slabs and the slabs are then cut in half and spread with margarine. Cornbread doesn't hold as firmly as wheat or rye breads so it needs half wheat flour for the gluten to

keep it from being too crumbly. Cornbread doesn't lend itself to making sandwiches but it's bread all the same.

A favorite dish of mine since childhood is chunks of hot cornbread covered with pinto beans and the bean soup. Delicious!

To bake it you get together 2 cups of cornmeal, 1 cup of wheat flour, 2 tablespoons of bacon grease, cooking oil, melted margarine, etc., 2 teaspoons of salt. 1 egg, 3 teaspoons of baking powder and 1-1/2 cups of water.

To make a lighter loaf, substitute commercial white flour and milk and add another egg. This may taste better to some, but I like the cruder kind just fine.

Mix the flours and add the grease or oil and mix some more. Then add the egg and salt and mix some more. Now add the water and mix until smooth.

Preheat your oven to 375 degrees F. and add the baking powder and mix again. Then pour the batch into the baking pan and put it in the oven. Bake It for 45 minutes.

When this is baked you'll have 1 pound 7 ounces of extremely rich bread for a total cost of just under 20 cents. It's tasty, nutritious and very filling.

You can also make corn pancakes with this recipe. Use 2 cups of water so they'll spread, and fry them in bacon grease, etc., in a hot skillet like regular pancakes. When the bubbles in the middle of the cakes stay open. it's time to turn them. A couple of minutes later they're done. These are heavier than flour pancakes. Spread them with margarine while hot and they taste great with salt and pepper or even syrup if you're into sweets. These are the corn dodgers Rooster Cogburn carried with him as his mainstay while tracking Ruffians.

PINTO BEANS

A pound of dried pinto beans turns into 3 pounds of cooked beans. At 40 cents a pound, dried, that's a little over 13 cents for a pound of cooked beans.

Pinto beans are best cooked in a Crock-Pot as they take quite a while and no one cares with a Crock-Pot, but in a kettle they might be forgotten and burn.

Nothing is simpler to cook than beans. If you only want beans but little or no soup, put in 6 cups of water and 2 cups of beans, plus a couple teaspoons of salt, a teaspoon of pepper, chili powder or whatever seasoning suits you. Cook on high for three hours and if they mash easily they're done.

Otherwise cook for another hour. Since a Crock-Pot doesn't quite boil, you can't overcook them, so an hour or more doesn't matter. If you want bean soup, use 8 cups of water. I'd like you to make and try everything in this article. You'll find it's ever so easy and you'll be surprised at how much good-tasting, nutritious and filling food you can have for so little cost.

You'll not only learn how to cook but you'll realize that you and yours will never go hungry, as will so many who relate to food only as it is processed and prepared by others. You'll then wonder why anyone would be so stupid as to buy commercial "survival food" for \$ thousands when you can do better for \$ hundreds and learn while doing it.

I lose patience with people who see such food as dull and unappetizing. Especially women. You go to a Mexican restaurant, or Chinese, or Italian, pay an arm and a leg for admittedly delicious meals. Yet you fail to see that they are all prepared with simple, inexpensive ingredients, most of which are described in Survivor Vol. 1 or just about any good all-purpose cookbook.

Any woman who considers herself a good cook is fully capable of making any simple food taste good. If she can't, she'd better learn.

People who are so dependent-minded that they must pay others to prepare their food are in danger of losing everything. Don't you realize that that attitude causes the average family to spend about 30% of Its income on food when they could eat better on about 5%?

Your family could eat better and put that 25% savings to building a family business which would make you valuable to your community. You could even afford a greenhouse alongside your home. Succeeding issues will teach you to grow lots of food in a small space and make more from a few hundred square feet of land than you can at most jobs. Also, it will insure your safety, as your neighbors will fight to protect their food supply, which could be **you**.

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