



## History Cooks® Food and History Lesson

# Cowboy Cooking†

### Objectives

After completing this lesson, the student should be able to:

- Understand uses for and reasons for leftover food.
- Notice similarities/differences between present-day food and what the cowboys ate.

### Introduction

Students take turns reading paragraphs from page 12 of *Cowboy Cooking*.

#### CORNMEAL MUSH‡

Ingredients	Equipment
• 2¾ cups water	• medium saucepan
• 1¾ cups stone-ground cornmeal	• liquid measuring cup
• 1 cup cold water	• dry-ingredient measuring cups
• 1 tablespoon firmly packed brown sugar	• measuring spoons
• 1 teaspoon salt	• medium bowl
• butter and syrup as desired	• wooden spoon
	• cooktop

### Methods

1. In saucepan, bring 2¾ cups water to a boil.
2. Meanwhile, mix 1¾ cups cornmeal, 1 cup cold water, 1 tablespoon brown sugar and 1 teaspoon salt in bowl.
3. Slowly add mixture to boiling water, stirring constantly.
4. Cook over low heat about 15 minutes until thickened, stirring often.
5. Save half of mixture for corn dodgers.
6. Serve remaining mush with butter and syrup.

#### CORN DODGERS‡

Ingredients	Equipment
• 1 tablespoon butter or margarine for greasing	• paper towel or napkin
• ½ recipe cornmeal mush	• loaf pan (5" x 9")
• 1 tablespoon oil for frying	• table knife, cutting board
	• measuring spoons
	• skillet or electric skillet
	• spatula
	• cooktop

### Methods

1. Grease loaf pan by using paper towel or napkin to dab and spread 1 tablespoon of butter or margarine to lightly coat the inside of pan
2. Pour cornmeal mush into loaf pan. Chill several hours or overnight.
3. Loosen cornmeal from sides of an with table knife and turn out onto cutting board.
4. Cut into ½-inch slices. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in skillet.
5. Fry cornmeal slices over low heat. Turn once. Fry until browned, 4 to 5 minutes on each side. Serve with gravy or with butter and syrup.

### Demonstration

#### Option 1: Hands-On Student Cooking

Students divide into groups of 2 to 3. Instructor briefly demonstrates equipment use, discusses methods and introduces ingredients. Instructor assigns Cornmeal Mush recipe to each group OR assigns each group separate *Cowboy Cooking* recipes in addition to Cornmeal Mush.

#### Option 2: Instructional Cooking

Instructor prepares recipe with students' assistance. Instructor demonstrates equipment use, discusses methods, and introduces ingredients as recipe is prepared. Students actively participate in equipment use, ingredient measurement, and preparation methods.

### Class Discussion

#### Questions

**Hint:** Remember to approach questions from a modern day view as well as from "Cookie's" standpoint.

- What modern day dishes are comparable to cornmeal mush?
- Why would it be important to use leftover food, i.e. Cornmeal Dodgers?
- Is there strategy behind making such a large batch of cornmeal mush, only to save the rest for leftovers the next day? How would Cookie benefit from this mass method of cooking?
- Butter and syrup can be used to add sweetness and flavor to cornmeal mush and corn dodgers. What else could you add to these recipes to make them more "exciting?"

† Order direct from History Cooks®, SRP \$22.95. Special History Cooks Price: \$14.95 plus shipping.

‡ Recipe reprinted from *Cowboy Cooking* by Mary Gunderson and used by permission from Capstone Press, Blue Earth Books, 2000. ISBN 0-7368-0353-X



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