



### Hot Water Cornbread

Featured on March 15, 2019 for “Carla Hall’s Soul Food” demo with Carla Hall

*“Hot water cornbread’s one of those things you don’t get unless you grew up with it. I’m here to help you get it. Because it’s so good! First thing you should know: It’s not bread-y or bread-like. These golden patties are more like tater tots, crunchy crust on the outside with an almost creamy center. Sprinkle enough salt on them and you’ll be happy to munch on them plain... I’m not gonna lie: this cornbread is really easy and really hard to make. There are only a few ingredients and it takes 15 minutes start to finish. But you gotta get each step right to nail that crunchy-creamy texture without it going all dense hockey puck. It took me years to match my granny’s. Only after countless failures—even bastardizing granny’s original with wheat flour and eggs!—did I come up with this foolproof formula. The key? Cook the cornmeal enough to soften it, but not stiffen it. It needs to go into boiling water, then it needs to get off the heat so too much water doesn’t evaporate. And you need to start with fine white stoneground meal, the fresher the better. Finally, fry them at a steady sizzle so they don’t absorb too much oil while developing a golden crust.” – Carla Hall*

#### Hot Water Corn

Recipe from *Carla Hall’s Soul Food*, pg. 144

Yield: about 18

#### Ingredients

1 cup fine white stoneground cornmeal  
 ½ teaspoon baking powder  
 2 tablespoons vegetable shortening  
 ½ teaspoon salt, plus more for sprinkling  
 Vegetable oil, for frying

#### Directions

Whisk the cornmeal and baking powder in a small bowl.

Bring the shortening, salt, and 1 ½ cups water to a boil in a medium saucepan over medium heat, stirring to melt the shortening. Add the cornmeal mixture in a slow, thin stream, stirring steadily with a wooden spoon the whole time. When all of the cornmeal has been added, turn off the heat. Stir vigorously, scraping the bottom and edges of the saucepan, until the mixture is firm and slapping against the sides of the pan. The mixture should feel soft and not grainy. Let it cool until you can handle it with your hands.

Scoop 1 1/2 tablespoons dough, using a cookie scoop if you have one, into your hand and shape into a 1/3-inch-thick patty. Repeat with the remaining dough.

Fill a large cast iron skillet with oil to a depth of 1/8 inch. Heat over medium heat until shimmering. Add enough patties to fit in a single layer with an inch between them. You may have to work in batches.

Fry, turning once, until golden brown, 4 to 5 minutes per side. You don't want the oil too hot or the outsides will burn before the inside is hot, so adjust the heat if needed. Drain on paper towels and immediately sprinkle with salt. Serve hot.



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