

Neolithic MRE's (Meals, Ready to Eat)

Parched Corn



Dried corn ready to be parched

Corn – You can boil it, toast it, roast it, parch it, eat it raw, grill it, steam it, stew it, cream it, grind it, feed humans or animals with it. You can eat it fresh, freeze it, can it, dry it, drink it or burn it in your vehicle. It's a diverse food that can serve a prepper well if they know what to do with it.

Parched corn was eaten regularly by American Indians warriors and hunters as an extremely lightweight, high energy trail food long before European explorers showed up and was a typical food or treat for the pioneers as well. It is the original "trail snack" and can also be ground up for stews or soups.

If you're asking "What is parched corn" at this point, let me fill you in. Parched corn is a lot like the partly popped kernels in popcorn – you know, the ones with the white stripes down them – except it's a lot more tender, tastes a bit better and doesn't get stuck in your teeth. It's kind of like corn nuts – except it's the real thing!

Making parched corn is really quite simple – you just take dried corn kernels and roast them over heat and eat them. But even then there is a variety of things you can do with it – you can season it with onion salt, regular salt, Lowry's salt, garlic salt – or whatever flavorings you like. The way I was taught (and the way I'm about to teach) was to cover it in brown sugar – which makes it kind of like eating caramel corn.

My good friend, Justin H. who is a primitive survivalist and one of my heroes, taught me to keep parched corn in a cloth bag and carry it in all my survival kits, I suggest you do the same.

Here is a step by step pictorial on how to make parched corn.

Your corn must be dried, either on or off the cob. There are several ways you can dry it but the most common I know of is to hang it in a dry area in your home. It can also be dehydrated in your oven or dehydrator. Once dried, you can store the corn just about forever – this is a great way to preserve your harvest.

Remove the kernels from the cob – this should be as simple as lightly rubbing the cob. If it is difficult to get the kernels to drop off the cob, your corn is probably not dry enough.



After cleaning all the cobs, you should have a container full of corn.

Set for around medium heat and oil your skillet, once the oil has heated, coat the entire skillet with oil and drain the excess (we're not deep frying here). Add enough corn kernels to almost cover the bottom of the skillet. Your kernels should only be one level high. Notice in this picture that the kernels are yellow/white and look rather flat.

Stir continuously. I prefer to shake the pan back and forth, similar to popping corn over a fire. After 1 – 5 minutes, the corn will begin to turn light brown and will puff up like it's being filled with air. It will also begin to pop. A few pops is fine but if it start popping a lot, you probably have too much heat. Notice the difference in color and shape of the corn in this picture and the previous one. If you are adding seasoning you can do it during this part of the process or you can do it in the next step.

Once the corn is browned and has a nice round shape, remove it from the heat and place it on a container with a paper towel on it to absorb the excess oil. Dab the corn with another paper towel to make sure there is as little oil left on it as possible.



Once the oil has been absorbed, you can move it to a container to hold it all in. At this point, I add some brown sugar in, put the lid on and shake it. You can add any other flavorings at this point if you didn't do it previously.

The final product of parched brown sugar corn.

In just a few minutes you can easily create a high energy delicious trail food that can sustain you for quite a long time – and doesn't need preservatives or crinkly packaging to keep it from going bad!





Parched Corn From Your Dehydrator

Simply dehydrate as many one pound bags of frozen corn (which you bought on sale for less than a dollar a pound) as it will hold (about 12 to 14 hours at about 125 degrees). No need to defrost, just spread the frozen corn out evenly on the trays and get started.

When the cycle has been completed, the corn should be dry and hard (it will bounce when you drop it on a hard surface). To use as fresh corn, simply rehydrate in boiling water for about 10 or 15 minutes. Store in an airtight container or vacuum pack.

To make **Parched Corn**, set a heavy skillet on medium high heat. Wipe the pan with a paper towel and a little cooking oil. Add enough dried corn to form a single layer. Keep the corn moving in the pan so it doesn't burn. The sugars in the corn will begin to caramelize and turn the corn a rich golden brown. Do NOT let it burn. When most of the corn has been colored, remove it to a plate to cool. Do as many batches as you need.

Parched Corn and Pinole... The Real Deal

A little history....

Origin: 1622

As a word for the result of roasting, "parched" is attested in English as far back as the 1400s. However, parched corn is an American term and food, given to us by the Native Americans.

When CORN (1608) is raw, it does not keep well. Parch it, however, and it can be carried in a pouch and eaten as one travels along or stored for later use. An account of the Plymouth colony, published in 1622, reports that on a visit to an Indian village the previous summer a group of colonists "bought about a handfull of Meale of their parched Corne." At that time of year, they added, the corn was "very precious."

For travelers in the woods, parched corn was as useful then as trail mix is now. Roger Williams, writing about the Indians of New England, reported that they found "parch'd meal ...a readie very wholesome food, which they eate with a little water, hot or cold." A century and a half later, Lewis and Clark took parched meal with them on their great expedition to the Northwest and the Pacific Ocean. Parched corn sustained soldiers in the Civil War, and in the recollections of George Armstrong Custer's widow it also sustained the postwar army on the western frontier. "Officers and men subsisted on parched corn and horse-flesh," she wrote in 1890.

From "Camping and Woodcraft" (1917) by Horace Kephart...

"It is Indian corn parched in the hot ashes, the ashes being sifted from it; it is afterwards beaten to powder and put into a long leatherne bag trussed at the Indian's backe like a knapsack, out of which they take three spoonsful a day." Roger Williams, the founder of Rhode Island, said that a spoonful of nocake mixed with water made him "many a good meal." Rockahominy (Pinole) is nothing but Indian corn parched without burning, and reduced to Powder. The Fire drives out all the Watery Parts of the Corn, leaving the Strength of it behind, and this being very dry, becomes much lighter for carriage and less liable to be Spoilt by the Moist Air. Thus half a Dozen Pounds of this Sprightful Bread will sustain a Man for as many Months, provided he husband it well, and always spare it when he meets with Venison, which, as I said before, may be Safely eaten without any Bread at all. By what I have said, a Man needs not encumber himself with more than 8 or 10 Pounds of Provision, tho' he continue half a year".

The yaqui indians make a mixture of pinole, coffee, sugar, cocoa, and chiltepinos which they make into a thick drink by adding boiling water. An unusual and satisfying drink as old as the Mayan Empire itself.

Parched Corn and Pinole...

A good substitute for ground, parched corn (pinole) and maple sugar can be made from readily available round corn tortilla chips, lightly salted, if at all. Simply put a bunch of them in a single layer on a cookie sheet and bake them in the oven at about 250 degrees until golden brown. Don't let them burn. Pulverize them in a food processor until powdered, add the maple sugar to your taste as they are being chopped, and you will have a very tasty and handy trail food, much more tender than the real thing. You can substitute brown sugar instead of maple. Be careful not to get them too sweet.

Parched Corn is available commercially as "John Copes Toasted Dried Sweet Corn". It can be eaten as it comes from the package, followed by a few good swallows of water, or cooked in boiling water, a soup, or a stew. It's crunchy and quite good in its dry state, and will last indefinitely if protected from moisture.

Pinole is available commercially as a Native Mexican drink powder in all Mexican Markets. It's just Parched Corn ground to a fine powder.

Pinole is often called "La comida del desierto" and is a form of parched corn. Translated it means the food of the desert. When pinole is considered along with many modern concentrated foods, it will beat most all other food items because of its nutritive value and long lasting effects on hunger, even during periods of intense physical activities. It is a very convenient form in which you can carry a source of nutrition which can support a person for weeks without suffering any major intestinal or stomach disorders.

Roasted, ground corn was used mainly as an emergency food source. This was a staple item when sources of meat from game animals were scarce or unavailable. Many hunters of that day lived on meat alone, supplemented with wild vegetables and fruit that could be found. From Native Americans to explorers like Lewis and Clark, early pioneers and explorers were familiar with the benefits of parched corn and its value as a survival food.

Parched corn is 11.5% protein, 8.4% fat, and 72.3% carbohydrate with a food value of 1,915 calories per pound. This is approximately 60% higher than wheat. This compares to wheat bread which has 9.2% protein, 1.3% fat, 53.1% carbohydrates and a value of only 1,205 calories per pound. Parched corn owes its "staying power" to its relatively high nutritive value. When only 4 ounces are combined with a pint of water instead of cooked, it swells in the stomach to give your hunger a very satisfied feeling for a long period of time.

Traditional Pinole

Native Americans roasted corn kernels in hot ashes until brown and then cleaned the ashes, pounded it in a mortar, sifted it, and then mixed it with sugar. They ate about approximately 4 ounces diluted in a pint of water as a traveling meal.

How to Make Pinole – The Modern Way

1.) Heat commercially available masa harina in a wok or frying pan, stirring constantly, until it is just barely brown. Be careful not to burn it.

2.) You can also bake the masa harina for 4 to 5 minutes on a baking sheet in a moderate to hot oven while stirring occasionally.

You can add ground cinnamon, honey, brown or white sugar as a supplementary ingredient. Toasting adds a very pleasant nutty flavor and helps prevent the need for drinking a lot of water when combined with pinole. This is due to the fact that the corn is cooked in the parching process. Cool the pinole and then store it in an air tight and moisture resistant container. It has a shelf life similar to corn meal when properly stored and requires no refrigeration.

Pinole can also be purchased ready made in some specialty food stores in many areas.

Toss the corn with maple sugar, brown sugar, salt or whatever you wish to season it with (seasoning not required). If kept dry, it will last indefinitely. A hand full of well chewed corn and a glass of water will fill your stomach and provide all the nutrition and energy you need for weeks at a time.

Ezekiel Bread

Combine the following whole grains and legumes:

2 1/2 cups hard red wheat (Brown or White Rice + 1 Cup Corn or Tapioca Flour for Gluten free)

1 1/2 cup spelt or rye (Biblically, spelt (fitches) was used, Ezekiel 4:9) (Oats or Quinoa for Gluten Free)

1/2 cup barley (hulled barley)

1/4 cup millet

1/4 cup lentils (green preferred)

1/4 cup great northern beans

1/4 cup red kidney beans

1/4 cup pinto beans

Stir the above ingredients very well. Grind to flour in flour mill. Measure into large bowl:

4 cups lukewarm water

1 cup honey

1/2 cup oil

2 T. Red Star Yeast

Set aside for 3-5 minutes. to allow yeast to bloom.

Add to yeast mixture 2 tsp. salt and the fresh milled flour from above mixture of grains and legumes

Stir or knead until well kneaded, about 10 mins. This is a batter type bread and will not form a smooth ball. Pour dough into greased pans. You may use 2 large loaf pans (10 X 5 X 3) or 3 med. loaf pans or 2- 9 X 13 brownie pans. Let rise in a warm place for one hour or until the dough is almost to the top of the pan. If it rises too much it will overflow the pan while baking. Bake at 350 degrees for 45-50 mins. for loaf pans and 35-40 mins for brownie pans. This is a very sweet, moist, cake-like bread. You may also add fruits and nuts or use the flour made from this mixture in other favorite recipes. This healthy combination of grains and beans is worth experimenting with. When these grains and legumes are combined, an amazing thing happens. A complete protein is created that closely parallels the protein found in milk and eggs. In fact, the protein quality is so high, that it is 84.3% as efficient as the highest recognized source of protein, containing all 9 essential amino acids. There are a total of 18 amino acids present in this unique bread. (For fasting divide bread into 8 equal parts weighing 1/2 pound each. Eat a 1/2 pound cake and drink 3 quarts of water every day.) You can survive on this, and this alone for a very, very long time.

Cornell Bread

Sam's Club sells 25 lbs. of baker's flour in heavy paper bags for about \$10.00. This amounts to about .40 cents a pound or .40 cents a loaf for the flour. Shelf life is shorter under these packaging conditions though. You can store white flour in a galvanized garbage can with bay leaves in it to discourage the 6-legged brethren 'n sistren. The addition of soy flour and instant nonfat dried milk to your bread is providing a protein/carb complete meal. This is especially important if you have small children. If you have kids, they will love it. The aroma is incredible. French toast is excellent. You can also add 2 -3 Tbsp. of toasted wheat germ to enrich it further.

Place in a large mixing bowl and let stand:

3 cups of warm water

2 pkges or 2 Tbs. of active dry yeast

2 Tbsp. honey

2 Tbsp. oil

3 tsp. sea salt

In separate container (I use a big Tupperware, measure then shake!)

6 cups unbleached flour

2 cups whole wheat flour

1 cup full-fat soy flour

1 cup non-fat dry milk

Stir the liquids and add 1/2 to 3/4 of flour mixture. Beat vigorously. Add remaining flour. Work with hands till its ready to knead. Knead for 5 minutes or so. Place in an oiled bowl and rub little oil on top. Let rise in a warm place till double in size (1-3 hours - test by seeing if fingerprint remains in dough). Punch down, fold over edges, turn upside down to rise for another 20-30 min. (test again). Turn onto board, divide into 3 portions. Let rest 10 minutes. Make 3 loaves. Place in oiled pans. (8 1/2 x 4 1/2 x 2 1/2). Let rise till double (45 min). Bake at 350 for 45-60 minutes. Check doneness by tapping bottom of loaf - if it sounds hollow its done.

Dutch Oven baking

This recipe will work in two 12" ovens. Just form into two round loaves and place in greased oven for final rising. When it "ALMOST" doubles its time to bake. Bake with both top and bottom heat for 2/3's of the time and finish with only top heat. So for 350 degrees that's 17 coals on the top and 8 on the bottom. Since it takes about 45 minutes, after 30 minute take oven off bottom heat and continue with only top heat. Rotate oven every 15 min 1/4 turn for that first 30 minutes and for the final 15 minutes check to see if bread is evenly browning. Adjust coal position accordingly.

Bannock Bread

2 - 3 cups flour

(You can substitute 1/2 Cup. of the flour with 1/4 Cup each of powdered eggs and/or powdered milk for a richer bread)

2 Tbsp baking powder

1 tsp salt

1 Tbsp. sugar

2 - 3 Tbsp oil, butter or lard

2/3 cups warm water

Simple to make, five basic ingredients, one bowl to wash. This is tasty, nutritious and fun to cook on a stick over the campfire. It can also be cooked in a skillet. Bannock can be a meal in itself. The dry ingredients can be mixed ahead and carried in a one gallon zip lock. Everything can be mixed in the bag... No bowls to wash.

Directions: Put everything but the water in a bowl and mix with your fingers until crumbly. Slowly add water and mix until dough feels soft. It may seem that you don't have enough water, but keep working the dough till it holds together. Don't add more water! Take a small handful and wrap around the end of a green stick, like a marshmallow roast. Knead it so it stays together. Cook over coals for about 10 - 12 minutes, rotating to cook evenly. Eat as is, or add a bit of jam, maple syrup, butter or honey. Alternate method: roll out and pat the dough into a skillet. The dough should be no thicker than 1/2 inch. Cover and cook slowly over moderate, even heat. Turn to

brown both sides; ready in 20 minutes. Seeds, nuts, dried fruit, 1 Tbsp. more of sugar and cinnamon can be added to make a dessert Bannock.

Pemmican - The perfect food and Original MRE

2 cups dried meat or jerky (Teriyaki jerky preferred), depending on how lean it is, it can take 1, 2 lb per cup. Use only deer, moose, caribou, or beef (not pork or bear). Get it as lean as possible and double ground from your butcher if you don't have a meat grinder, or are not using home made, or commercial jerky. Spread it out very thinly on cookie sheets and dry at 180° overnight with the oven door slightly ajar, or until crispy and sinewy. Jerky must be redried just as the meat. No moisture. Re grind, process, or otherwise smash it into almost a powder.

2 cups dried fruit to taste, any one, or combination of the following; service berries, goose berries, currants, cranberries, raisins, cherries, dates, apricots, dried apples. Grind some and leave some diced for texture.

3 cups rendered tallow, use ONLY food grade, pure white beef suet (ask the butcher for it - 4 pounds). Cut into 1 inch chunks and heat on the stove over med (or Tallow) heat. Do NOT allow it to burn. Tallow is the liquid that will render out and should be poured off and strained through paper coffee filters. What's left over may be stored indefinitely in the fridge, or used to make tallow candles.

Add unsalted nuts (almonds, walnuts, pecans, peanuts, hazelnuts, or whatever you like) and seeds (sunflower, pumpkin) to taste, and a shot of honey. Combine in a bowl and hand mix until EVERYTHING is coated in tallow. Pat into a pan to make a loaf 1 inch thick. When hardened, slice into squares and wrap in waxed paper, or double bag into portions. The mixture will last almost forever without refrigeration and even longer with it. I have eaten it four years old. It actually improves with age. Use a small marble sized piece or two to flavor soups, stews and raman noodles.

HINT: Vary the fat content to the temperature in which it will be consumed. Less for summer. Lots for winter. Not only is it good energy food for canoeing and hiking, but an excellent snack for cross country skiing. Pemmican is a COMPLETE AND PERFECT food. Fats, carbohydrates, protein, sugars, vitamins and minerals are all present. Under the harshest of conditions, a lightly salted golf ball sized piece, two or three times per day is enough. You can survive on it alone for years, and many, including Admiral Peary did. Men forced to live solely on salted meats, bread and cereals, suffered and died from scurvy: a disease which results from the lack of Vitamin C. Men who lived on pemmican had no scurvy. It is unequalled for compactness, lightness, wholesomeness, palatability and sustaining power.

This is not the kumbaya, peanut butter, chocolate chip, and granola yuppie abomination. This is the Pemmican that the long hunters, early trappers and explorers, and the Native Americans before them, carried and lived on for months and years at a time. If your having trouble with the recipe, call me and I'll talk you through it.

Hardtack... The Real Deal

Hardtack is thick cracker made of flour, water, and sometimes salt. When properly stored, it will last for years. Before the American Civil War, soldiers called it biscuit or hard bread, sailors referred to it as sea biscuit or pilot's bread, but to the Union Army of the Potomac during the American Civil War, it was known as hardtack, a name that stuck and spread to other units, including the Confederacy, but the name hardtack seems to have not been in general use among the armies of the West.

Because it could be prepared cheaply and would last so long, hardtack was the most convenient food for soldiers, explorers, pioneers, or anyone else who needed to be able to pack light and move fast.

While hardtack was furnished to the army by weight, the biscuits were doled out to soldiers by number. In some units, a ration of hardtack was nine, while it was ten in others, but there was usually enough to go around because some soldiers would refuse to eat it.

Although it was nutritious, soldiers complained that they could eat ten of them in a short time and still be hungry. But the most common complaint was that they were often so hard that they couldn't be bitten into, that it took a very strong blow even to break them.

Another common problem with hardtack was when they were moldy or wet, as sometimes happened. It has been suggested that this occurred when they were boxed too soon after baking, or due to exposure to the weather. Sometimes they became infested with maggots or weevils during storage, conditions that seldom afflicted the harder variety.

When the hardtack was moldy or moist, it was thrown away and made good the next time that rations were issued, but soldiers usually had to put up with insect infestations. According to accounts, it was not uncommon for a soldier to find his coffee swimming with weevils after the hard bread was broken up in it; but they were easily skimmed off.

Hardtack was eaten by itself, or crumbled into coffee. Probably more were eaten that way than in any other, as they were usually eaten as breakfast and supper, but there were other ways to prepare them. Sometimes they were crumbled into soups, which

they served to thicken. Some soldiers crumbed them into cold water, then fried the crumbs in the juice and fat of meat, creating a dish that was known as skillygalee or cush. Some preferred to eat them toasted, either to more easily crumb them into coffee; or in the rare case when it was available, with butter. A few who managed to save a portion of their sugar ration spread it upon the hardtack.\

Army Hardtack Recipe

- 4 cups flour
- 4 teaspoons salt
- Water (about 2 cups)
- Pre-heat oven to 375° F
- Makes about 10 pieces

Place the flour in a bowl. Dissolve the Salt in the Water. Add just enough water (less than two cups) so that the mixture will stick together, producing a dough that won't stick to hands, rolling pin or pan. Mix the dough by hand. Roll the dough out, shaping it roughly into a rectangle. Cut into the dough into squares about 3 x 3 inches and 1/2 inch thick.

After cutting the squares, press a pattern of four rows of four holes into each square, using a nail or other such object. Do not punch through the dough. The appearance you want is similar to that of a modern saltine cracker. Turn each square over and do the same thing to the other side.

Place the squares on an ungreased cookie sheet in the oven and bake for 30 minutes. Turn each piece over and bake for another 30 minutes. The crackers should be slightly brown on both sides. The fresh crackers are easily broken but as they dry, they harden and assume the consistency of fired brick.

Soldiers had a number of methods for fixing hardtack, depending on what they had on hand. These included: Eating plain. Breaking up the crackers in a pot of coffee. Breaking up the crackers in a soup or stew (as a thickening agent). Toasting a cracker over a fire and buttered. Soaking in cold water, browning in salt pork fat, then salting to taste. Soaking in condensed milk to make milk toast. Soaking in water, frying in salt pork fat, and topping with sugar. Crumbling crackers, mixing with bacon, rasins, and boiling in condensed milk.

Places to find Hardtack...

G.H. Bent Co.: <http://www.bentscookiefactory.com>

Mechanical Baking Co.: <http://www.mechanical-bakery.com>

33rd Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry: <http://www.amtma.com/33dwis.html>

Sailor Boy Pilot Bread - Interbake Foods Inc Portland, 97294

Pocket Soup

From a recently killed deer, elk, moose, or steer, break all the long bones to allow access to the marrow, add most of the spine and neck bones, whatever tendons or ligaments are available and all the joints on both front and back legs. Put these into a large stock pot, cover them with water and bring it to a boil. After boiling covered for 8 hours, remove all the meat and bones and let the liquid cool overnight in the refrigerator. In the morning there will a layer of hard white fat and floating solids on top, which you should scoop off completely. Continue to boil, now uncovered, and in about 6 more hours the broth will be very thick, like warm molasses. Be careful not to let it burn. Pour this into a shallow bread pan, and it will make a layer about 3/8 inch thick. When it cools, it will be the consistency of hard jello, very rubbery. Remove it from the pan, cut it into rectangles, place it on waxed paper and dry it in the dehydrator for one day, and it will turn hard. It tastes like a very flavorful meat broth. An old recipe calls for salt, pepper, mace, cloves and brandy to be added during the boiling, which sounds much more highly seasoned than mine. I add only 1 teaspoon each of salt and pepper.

It is necessary to have an adequate amount of cartilage and connective tissue to begin with, because the "soup" won't ever get hard without it, that's where the gelatin comes from. If you include all the joints and the spine, it should be alright, but you can add a couple of pounds of pig's feet to make sure. I've never had to do that. One of the ways the long hunters used this food was to reconstitute it by boiling, then adding a few spoonfuls of parched corn and cooking until this thickened. The result is a sort of meat flavored porridge, very tasty and satisfying.

A square of pocket soup about 2 X 3 inches dissolved in 1 1/2 cup boiling water makes a nice stock. Add 1/4 cup toasted yellow stone ground corn meal to the broth and simmer it for about 10 minutes until it thickens nicely. Salt and pepper seasoning, and a pinch of sugar make a very tasty meat-flavored "hasty pudding". This is easy to do in camp, and carrying enough parched corn and pocket soup squares for several day's meals is very little trouble, both being so light and compact. Hardtack, jerky cut into small pieces, or pemmican added to the mix makes an even more sustaining meal, and adds little to the weight of your pack.

Pine Tea

Pine needles contain 5 times the vitamin C of lemons, and vitamin C is absolutely vital to prevent scurvy.

How to make Pine Tea, the Native American Cure for Scurvy:

- Grab a handful of pine needles, about 1/4 cup is all you need.
- Place in a cup of boiling water for ten to fifteen minutes.
- Add lemon and honey if available.
- You now have 100% of the US RDA requirement for vitamin C.

Drink up and enjoy your woodsy brew, it tastes and smells like the pine forest from which it came.