

Papa's Cornbread

"In honor of Achille Leon Hebert Jr., my maternal grandfather."

Serves 8 | 15 minutes prep + 30 hours cook time

Recipe courtesy of Pableaux Johnson

While Pableaux was adamant that his red beans Mondays were not a dinner party, saying loudly and often that "it's just supper," he indulged in a bit of culinary theater with his Cajin family's cornbread. When the top was golden brown he'd pull the cast iron skillet out of the oven, toss on a knob of butter, swirl the pan to make sure every inch was covered, and then flip the cornbread out of the skillet and catch it so the bottom got buttered, too.

"The key to a well-developed cornbread crust is preheating the oil in a cast-iron skillet. This version of the buttermilk classic contains just a hint of flour for a refined texture and sugar for sweetness. For a smaller batch suitable for a 5-inch skillet, halve the ingredients. All other steps remain the same."

~ Pableaux Johnson

2 cups cornmeal

4 tablespoons unbleached flour

2 tablespoon sugar

4 teaspoons baking powder

1 teaspoon salt

2 egg

1 ½ cups buttermilk

**3-4 tablespoons extra virgin
olive oil***

***While the original Hebert
family recipe calls for vegetable
oil, olive oil makes the corn
bread taste better**

Step 1 Preheat the oven to 425 degrees.

Step 2 In a heat proof mixing bowl, thoroughly blend dry ingredients with a wire whisk or wooden spoon. Add egg and buttermilk, then stir until the mixture forms a medium-thick batter.

Step 3 In a 9-inch cast iron skillet, heat the oil until lightly smoking. Swirl the oil around to coat the inside of the skillet. Then pour the hot oil into the batter and MIX VIGOROUSLY until the oil is thoroughly blended in then pour back into the skillet.

Step 4 Bake for about 25 minutes or until slightly brown on top.