

PLAINS INDIAN STYLE FRYBREAD

1 cup of bleached flour
1 tsp powdered milk
1 tsp baking powder
1/2 cup of water
Vegetable oil for cooking
extra flour for your hands

Mix flour, milk, baking powder and water all at once in a small bowl. Mix with fork into a sticky ball. Flour hands very well. Mix the dough with your hands to form a ball. Do NOT knead the dough, it will make it tough.

Cut the ball of dough into 4 equal pieces. With your hands and fingers, press each piece into a circle about 6" in diameter. Don't worry about it being perfectly circular, it won't taste any different.

Pour oil at least 1-inch deep into a deep heavy pot or skillet, heat it to about 350 degrees. Take the formed dough and gently place it into the oil, being careful not to splatter the hot oil. Fry until golden brown, about 2-3 minutes on each side. Place the cooked fry bread on a paper towel to absorb excess oil.

Fry bread can be kept warm in a 200 degree F. oven for up to 1 hour. They also refrigerate well and can be reheated on a 350 degree F. oven for 10-15 minutes before serving.

Makes 4 pieces

SOUTHWEST INDIAN FRYBREAD

4 cups flour
2 teaspoons salt
2 teaspoons baking powder
4 tablespoons shortening
2 cups ice-cold water (approx.)
Vegetable oil for cooking
extra flour for your hands and surface

Sift all dry ingredients together. Cut in shortening. Add water a little at a time while combining ingredients. Depending on heat and humidity you may need a little more water or a little less. Roll dough out onto a floured surface and knead it gently until all dry and wet ingredients are well combined and a fairly soft dough has formed. Cover and let dough rest for 30 minutes to 1 hour.

Lightly flour a clean surface and roll out the dough into a rectangle about 15" x 10" x 1/4" thick. With a sharp knife cut the dough into 4" x 3" rectangles. Stack the rectangles on top of each other between sheets of parchment paper and let rest for 15-30 minutes.

Meantime, heat up oil in a deep skillet or fryer to 375 degrees F. Gently drop the rolled out rectangles into the hot oil one at a time. The dough will puff up and float as it cooks. Roll them over in the hot oil so that they cook on each side. Gently remove when lightly golden (about 1 minute on each side). Place the frybread on a paper towel-covered plate to absorb excess oil.

Cut the frybread open on 3 sides and fill with sweet or savory filling of your choice.

Serves 6-8

SOUTHWEST INDIAN TACOS

The Southwest Indian tradition is to prepare this dish with beans and little or no meat, as meat was difficult to obtain. Today's Indian Tacos, as served at powwows across the nation, often lean more toward the Mexican flavoring using ground beef and packages of taco seasoning. Traditionally, they were made with beans and little or no meat, depending on what was available. The bean recipe below is from the Zuni tradition.

6 pieces of prepared Southwest Indian frybread (see preceding recipe)

Bean Topping:

1½ cups dried anasazi beans (red kidney beans is closest modern equivalent)

3 cups water + 4 more cups water

Meat or bones for flavoring, as available

Salt

Coriander

Dried red chili

Additional toppings:

1½ cups greens (watercress, purslane, young dandelion greens, spinach or arugula)

1 large red tomato diced

1 sweet onion, thinly sliced

1 bunch of radishes, thinly sliced

Zuni Relish

Soak beans overnight in 3 cups water. Drain and add fresh water to cover. Add uncooked meat chunks or bones. Bring all to a boil, cover and cook for about 3 hours or until the bean skins break. Add salt and other seasoning and simmer on low heat for 30-45 minutes more. Set beans aside.

Prepare the frybread according to recipe.

Thinly slice fresh ingredients and set aside. You are now ready to serve.

TO SERVE: Place frybread on plate. Put about ½ cup of whole beans (with little or no broth) on top of the fried dough. Add sliced fresh toppings. Finish with Southwest Indian salsa. Other optional toppings may be added as desired.

Serves 6

ZUNI RELISH

1 cup ground cherries (aka tomatillos)

¼ cup chopped onions

3 garlic cloves finely chopped

¼ cup chopped green chilies, roasted, seeded, and deveined (or canned)

¼ cup chopped red New Mexico chili, roasted, seeded and deveined

Or ¼ cup red pepper and 2 seeded serrano peppers processed to paste

½ cup chopped fresh cilantro

Or ¼ teaspoon ground coriander seed

Salt to taste

Remove husks from the ground cherries. Rinse the ground cherries and place in a medium sauce pan. Cover with water and simmer for 15 minutes. Drain. Process ground cherries in a blender or food processor. Add finely chopped ingredients and season to taste. For a spicier relish add more chilies. Refrigerate and serve cold.

Variations: Add ½ cup cooked corn kernels for color and flavor. Add 1 cup chopped tomatoes, red or yellow. Add ¼ cup green peppers. Substitute green onions for the regular onions.

PUMPKIN-PIÑON BREAD

From *Native American Cooking: Foods of the Southwest Indian Nations* by Lois Ellen Frank, Clarkson N. Potter, publisher, 1991, p. 67

This bread is prepared using Native Southwest ingredients. Lois Ellen Frank offers it in her cookbook in combination with a rich pumpkin sauce and homemade pumpkin ice cream. Although not an “old ways” bread, it is something found in more modern Native American cooking, with adaptations to accommodate today’s palate. We offer it to you, as well.

2 cups flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
1½ cups sugar
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
3 eggs, beaten
¾ cup milk
½ cup sunflower oil
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 cups cooked pumpkin, may be canned
1½ cups roasted, hulled pine nuts (piñons)

To make the pumpkin bread, preheat the oven to 350* F. Sift together the flour, baking soda, salt, sugar, and cinnamon.

In a separate bowl, combine the eggs, milk, oil, and vanilla and mix well. Stir in the pumpkin puree and the dry ingredients, mix well, and fold in the piñons.

Pour the batter into 2 greased 5 x 9-inch loaf pans and bake 45 minutes, until the bread springs back when touched.