



Jeremy Jackson

The Cornbread Book
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Q: Which cornbread is the authentic cornbread: yellow or white?

A: This depends on who you ask. But since you're asking me, I'll tell you my opinion: all cornbread is authentic, as long as it's good, hot, and made with love and fresh ingredients. Though white and yellow cornmeal can have slightly different flavors it's a very small factor in how the cornbread will taste. Whether your cornmeal is fresh or stale is much more significant. Or whether your cornmeal is whole-grain or degerminated. I think it's a bit silly to get fixated on the color of your cornmeal. It's a bit like asking whether a blue car or a red car is better.

Q: In the introduction to *The Cornbread Book*, you state that your third goal for the book is to find a wife. Do you think that a book about cornbread will actually accomplish this?**A:** Yes. It will. Don't be such a cynic.

Q: I've heard that it's possible to actually eat too much cornbread, a kind of cornbread "overdose." Is this true?**A:** No. The idea that one can consume too much cornbread is a myth

perpetrated by corn-haters and small-minded bureaucrats. I mean, look at me for example. I myself eat more cornbread than some small nations, and I'm an epitome of health, vigor, vim, charm, and good posture. I also control the weather.

Q: How can I tell if my cornmeal is fresh? How long does it last once I buy it?**A:** If your cornmeal smells or tastes musty, dusty, sour, or bland, it's past its prime. When in doubt, throw it out. Most cornmeal producers don't tell you when their cornmeal was milled, which makes it difficult to know how long the product has been sitting in the store before you bought it. But in general, a degerminated cornmeal should last six to nine months in the pantry. Whole-grain or stone-ground cornmeal has a much shorter shelf life, and it should be kept in an airtight container in the freezer, where it should last six months. If you have a busy natural foods store in your community, give their bulk cornmeal a try: high turnover means the product will most likely be fresh. And if the cornmeal is organic, all the better.

Q: In the historical introduction to your book, you mention a lot of old-timey cornbreads, like hoe cakes, corn dodgers, and johnnycakes. Why didn't you include recipes for these breads in your book?**A:** I tested a lot of old cornbread recipes and most of them were bland or tough. Many of America's historical cornbreads were staple breads for people who didn't have many other options. In other words, they provided sustenance, but they don't necessarily taste very good to our modern palates. That said, there are certainly still cooks out there who make fantastic historical cornbreads, though the old recipes have often been changed to include modern techniques and ingredients.

Q: How did you come to write "The Cornbread Song"? Do you ever perform it?**A:** When I was finishing *The Cornbread Book*, I was eating so much cornbread and thinking about it so much that I guess I just had cornbread on the brain, and I sat down one night with my guitar and I was a little bit exasperated with cornbread and I wrote the chorus about eating cornbread four times a day and then the rest just flowed from there. As for performing "The Cornbread Song," I do it when the spirit moves me. Or whenever I'm paid a large cash sum.

Q: Hey, there's a pudding in your book. How is that considered a cornbread?**A:** If you want to fight about this, let's meet in the parking later. When you write your own cornbread book, you can put whatever you want to in it. See if I care.

Q: Do you really want to make cornbread the official bread of the United States? How can readers help?**A:** Yes. Contact your state and federal legislators and tell them you think cornbread should be our official bread.