

## Southern Cracklin' Bread: Crispy, Savory, & Delicious

Cracklin' Bread: A Crispy, Savory Taste of Southern Tradition by Jason Griffith



**OVEN**  
**450°F**

**TIME**  
**5 min**

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### INGREDIENTS

2 cups self-rising cornmeal

1 cup pork cracklins (ensure they are crispy and roughly chopped if very large)

1 cup buttermilk (plus more as needed)

2 eggs

2 Tablespoons bacon grease

Swaps and Notes:

**Self-Rising Cornmeal:** This is key for the proper texture and rise. If you only have plain cornmeal, you can approximate self-rising by adding 1 ½ teaspoons of baking powder and ¼ teaspoon of salt per cup of cornmeal.

**Pork Cracklins:** These are essential for authentic cracklin' bread. You can often find them pre-packaged, or render your own pork belly/fat. Ensure they are crispy, not chewy, as they will soften slightly when incorporated into the batter.

**Buttermilk:** Buttermilk reacts with the leavening in self-rising cornmeal to create a tender crumb. If you don't have buttermilk, you can make a quick substitute: add 1 tablespoon of white vinegar or lemon juice to a liquid measuring cup, then fill to the 1-cup line with regular milk. Let it sit for 5 minutes before using.

**Bacon Grease:** This is non-negotiable for flavor and crust! Render your own from bacon or buy rendered bacon fat. If you absolutely must, you can use butter or shortening in the pan, but the flavor won't be the same.

Optional Add-ins: Some folks like a finely diced jalapeño or a bit of shredded cheddar cheese in their cracklin' bread for extra flavor, though it veers from the traditional.

Instructions:

**Preheat Oven & Prepare Skillet:** Preheat your oven to a hot 450°F (230°C). Place the 2 tablespoons of bacon grease directly into a 10-inch cast iron skillet. Place the skillet in the preheating oven or over medium heat on the stovetop to allow the bacon grease to melt and get very hot. This hot grease is crucial for creating that signature crispy crust.

**Mix the Batter:** In a medium-sized mixing bowl, combine the self-rising cornmeal and the two eggs. Add the 1 cup of buttermilk and stir the ingredients together. Continue adding more buttermilk, a tablespoon at a time, as needed, until you achieve a slightly thin, pourable batter. It should be thinner than pancake batter but not watery.

**Incorporate Cracklins and Grease:** Add the pork cracklins to the batter and stir well to combine. Once the bacon grease in the skillet is melted and shimmering hot, carefully pour it from the skillet directly into the batter. Immediately stir again to combine the hot grease with the batter. This helps prevent a soggy bottom and adds incredible flavor.

**Pour into Hot Skillet & Bake:** Carefully pour the prepared batter into the hot, greased cast iron skillet, spreading it out evenly with a spatula. The hot grease should create a sizzle as the batter hits it.

**Bake:** Place the skillet in the preheated oven. Bake for 25-30 minutes, or as needed, until the top is beautifully lightly browned and a wooden skewer inserted into the center comes out clean.

**Loosen & Serve:** Once baked, remove the skillet from the oven. Immediately run a butter knife gently around the edges of the cornbread to loosen it from the skillet. Carefully flip the bread out onto a serving plate. Top with extra butter if desired, allowing it to melt into the warm bread. Serve hot and enjoy every crispy, savory bite!

Tips for Success:

**Hot Skillet & Grease:** This is the most crucial step for a crispy crust. The cast iron skillet and bacon grease must be screaming hot when the batter goes in.

**Self-Rising Cornmeal:** Don't substitute plain cornmeal unless you add leavening agents.

Self-rising ensures the correct rise and texture.

**Buttermilk Consistency:** The "slightly thin batter" is important. Too thick, and it will be dense; too thin, and it might be soggy. Adjust with a little more buttermilk as needed.

**Stir in Hot Grease Quickly:** Once you pour the hot bacon grease into the batter, stir quickly to combine before it cools down too much.

**Don't Overmix:** As with most quick breads, mix the batter until just combined. Overmixing can lead to a tough texture.

**Serve Warm:** Cracklin' bread is best enjoyed warm when the crust is crispy and the interior is moist.

**Serving Suggestions and Pairings:**

A big bowl of chili or soup

Southern-style beans (pinto beans, black-eyed peas)

Braised greens like collards or mustard greens

Any kind of stew or gumbo (try my [This Cajun Chicken Sausage Gumbo is My Favorite Bowl of Southern Comfort](#))

Alongside a roasted chicken or pork roast (like my [Sunday Pork Roast](#) article)

My [This Tomato Skillet with Okra and Sausage is My Favorite Quick Dinner Packed with Southern Flavor](#).

**Storage and Leftover Tips:**

**More Recipes You Will Love:**

For another comforting meat dish, check out [These Easy Turkey Wings are My Favorite Comfort Food for Lazy Sundays](#).

## DIRECTIONS

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11. **Don't : Overmix:** As with most quick breads, mix the batter until just combined. Overmixing can lead to a tough texture.
12. **Serve : Warm:** Cracklin' bread is best enjoyed warm when the crust is crispy and the interior is moist.
13. **Serving Suggestions and Pairings:** Cracklin' Bread is a versatile and incredibly comforting side dish that pairs wonderfully with a variety of hearty Southern and American meals. It's fantastic with:
  14. A big bowl of chili or soup
  15. Southern-style beans (pinto beans, black-eyed peas)
  16. Braised greens like collards or mustard greens
  17. Any kind of stew or gumbo (try my [This Cajun Chicken Sausage Gumbo is My Favorite Bowl of Southern Comfort](#))
  18. Alongside a roasted chicken or pork roast (like my [Sunday Pork Roast](#) article)
  19. For other comforting and flavorful dishes, you might also enjoy:
    20. My [This : Tomato Skillet with Okra and Sausage is My Favorite Quick Dinner Packed with Southern Flavor.](#)
    21. **Storage and Leftover Tips:** Cracklin' Bread is truly best enjoyed fresh and warm for optimal crispness. If you have leftovers, store them in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2-3 days. To reheat and revive some of the crispness, place slices in a preheated toaster oven or conventional oven at 350°F (175°C) for a few minutes until warmed through and crispy on the edges. Microwaving will soften it.
    22. **More Recipes You Will Love:** If you loved the authentic Southern comfort of this Cracklin' Bread, you'll find similar satisfaction in these other fantastic recipes:
      23. For another comforting meat dish, check out : [These Easy Turkey Wings are My Favorite Comfort Food for Lazy Sundays.](#)
      24. If you're into quick and easy breakfast or brunch ideas, my [This One-Pan Breakfast Bake Will Make You Skip is fantastic.](#)
      25. And for a classic dessert that feeds a crowd and brings back fond memories, my [This Big Family Banana Pudding is My Favorite Classic Dessert to Feed a Crowd](#)

is always a huge hit.

## SWAPS & NOTES

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**More recipes:** [ChefManiac.com](https://chefmaniac.com)

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/southern-cracklin-bread-crispy-savory-delicious/>