

## Budget-Friendly Great Northern Beans and Skillet Cornbread Recipe

Old-Fashioned Pot of Beans & Cornbread



**OVEN**  
**350°F**

**TIME**  
**15-20 min**

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### INGREDIENTS

For the Beans:

The Star: 1 pound dried Great Northern beans (soaked overnight for best results).

The Flavor Bomb: 1 meaty ham hock.

The Trinity: 1 onion, 1 carrot, and 1 celery stalk (all chopped).

The Liquids: 1 (15-ounce) can diced tomatoes and 1 (10-ounce) can beef broth.

The Spices: 1 Tbsp dried thyme, 1/2 tsp dried bay leaves, salt, and pepper.

For the Cornbread:

Dry Goods: 1 cup cornmeal, 1/2 cup all-purpose flour, 1/2 cup granulated sugar.

Leavening: 1 tsp baking powder and 1/4 tsp baking soda.

Wet Ingredients: 1 large egg, 1/2 cup buttermilk, 1/4 cup vegetable oil, and 1 Tbsp melted butter.

### DIRECTIONS

- 1. Slow Cook the Ham Hock:** Place the ham hock in a large pot and cover with enough water. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to low. Simmer for 2-3 hours. This long simmer is crucial-it breaks down the connective tissue and releases all that smoky collagen into the water, creating a rich base. Once tender, remove the hock and set aside.
- 2. SautØ and Simmer:** Keep the ham hock broth in the pot. Add your chopped onion, carrot, and celery. SautØ them right in that smoky broth until they begin to soften.
- 3. Add the Heart of the Dish:** Pour in the diced tomatoes, beef broth, and your (soaked/drained) Great Northern beans. Bring the pot back to a boil, then reduce to low. Cover and simmer for 15-20 minutes if using pre-cooked beans, or until the dried beans reach your desired tenderness (this may take 60-90 minutes depending on the age of your beans).
- 4. Shred the Ham:** While the beans are finishing, take the meat off the ham hock. Discard the fat and bones, and shred the tender meat into bite-sized pieces. Return the shredded ham to the pot.
- 5. Final Seasoning:** Stir in the thyme, bay leaves, salt, and pepper. Let it simmer for a few more minutes so the herbs can bloom.
- 6. Bake the Cornbread:** Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C) and grease an 8x8 inch pan. Whisk your dry ingredients in one bowl and your wet ingredients in another. Combine them gently-don't overmix! Pour the batter into the pan and bake for 25-30 minutes.

## SWAPS & NOTES

**The Beans:** If you can't find Great Northern beans, Navy beans or Cannellini beans are excellent substitutes.

**The Ham Hock:** If you can't find a ham hock, a meaty leftover ham bone or even smoked turkey wings work beautifully.

**The Sugar:** My recipe leans toward a slightly sweeter, "cake-like" Southern cornbread.

If you prefer savory, savory cornbread, you can reduce the sugar to 2 tablespoons.

### TIPS FOR SUCCESS

**Soak Your Beans:** For the best texture and to reduce digestive "surprises," soak your dried beans in water for at least 8 hours or overnight.

**The Ham Hock Secret:** Look for a ham hock with a good amount of meat on it.

Some are mostly bone and skin; you want the pink meat to shred back into your soup.

**Don't Overbake:** Check the cornbread at the 25-minute mark.

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

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/budget-friendly-great-northern-beans-and-skillet-cornbread-recipe/>