



Staffordshire Oatcakes

Staffordshire oatcakes are wholemeal oat pancakes. Here they are filled with bacon, mushrooms and melted cheese. This makes a big batch – ideal for when you have guests, but the cooked oatcakes also freeze beautifully. Flour from Heage Windmill.

From The Hairy Bikers Go North 7: The Peak District

Preparation time **over 2 hours** Cooking time **30 mins to 1 hour**

Makes 12 oatcakes

Ingredients

- 225g/8oz fine oatmeal
- 100g/3½oz wholemeal flour
- 100g/3½oz plain flour
- 1 tsp quick-action yeast
- pinch salt
- 1 tbsp baking powder
- 4 tbsp vegetable oil
- 12 rashers streaky bacon
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 150g/5¼oz chestnut mushrooms, cut in half
- 300g/10½oz mature cheddar cheese, grated

Method

- 1 Mix together the oatmeal, wholemeal flour, plain flour, yeast and salt in a bowl until well combined. Make a well in the centre of the mixture, then gradually add 825ml/1 pint 10fl oz water in a thin stream, stirring well with a wooden spoon, until the batter is well combined and the consistency of thick double cream. (NB: You may not need to use all of the water.) Cover the batter with a damp, clean tea towel and set aside for 3–4 hours (or up to 8 hours in a cool place).
- 2 Once ready to cook the batter, whisk in the baking powder until well combined.
- 3 Heat a teaspoon of vegetable oil in a frying pan over a medium heat. When the oil is hot, add a ladleful of the batter mixture and swirl the pan to coat the bottom of it in a thin layer of the batter. Fry the oatcake for 1–2 minutes, or until golden-brown on one side. Flip the oatcake and fry for a further minute, or until golden-brown on both sides.
- 4 Set the oatcake aside on a warm plate and cover with a sheet of greaseproof paper. Repeat the cooking process with the remaining batter mixture, to make about 12 oatcakes. Stack them on top of each other, separated by greaseproof paper, and keep warm.
- 5 Preheat the grill to its highest setting. When the grill is hot, arrange the streaky bacon onto a grill tray and grill for 3–4 minutes on each side, or until crisp and golden-brown on both sides. Set aside and keep warm.
- 6 Heat the olive oil in a separate frying pan over a medium heat. Add the mushrooms and fry for 3–4 minutes, or until golden-brown and cooked through. Set aside and keep warm.
- 7 When ready to serve, heat a frying pan over a medium heat. Return one of the cooked oatcakes to the hot pan and sprinkle grated cheese over one half of it. Continue to cook for 3–4 minutes, or until the cheese starts to melt, then place the bacon on top of the melted cheese and sprinkle over a spoonful of the mushrooms. Fold the other half of the oatcake over and continue to heat for a further minute, or until the cheese has fully melted. Repeat the process with the remaining oatcakes. Serve immediately.

Recipe Tips: To freeze the oatcakes, cook them up to and including step 4. Stack them with layers of greaseproof paper or non-stick baking paper between each pancake, then wrap well in two layers of cling film. They will keep for 4–6 months and can be defrosted individually at room temperature.

You can also serve the Staffordshire oatcakes as part of a proper cooked breakfast.

Melandra loaf

We named this after Melandra Castle, a Roman fort near Glossop in Derbyshire, where we had a brilliant picnic with some great local people. This fruit bread, studded with pineapple, cherries, currants and dates, is an ideal travelling companion, as it's quite substantial. It also toasts really well.

From *The Hairy Bikers Go North 7: The Peak District*

Preparation time **over 2 hours** Cooking time **1 to 2 hours**

Serves 8

Ingredients

flavourless oil, for the tin
600g/1lb 5oz plain flour, plus extra for dusting
10g/1/3 oz fast-action dried yeast
10g/1/3 oz salt
50g/1 3/4oz soft light brown sugar
50g/1 3/4oz currants
100g/3 1/2oz dried pineapple, finely diced
100g/3 1/2oz glacé cherries, roughly chopped
100g/3 1/2oz dates, finely chopped
1 orange, grated zest only
350ml/12fl oz whole milk
50g/1 3/4oz lard, diced

To decorate

2 tbsp apricot jam or marmalade, warmed through
Flaked almonds (optional)

Method

- 1 Line a 20cm/8in round deep cake tin with baking paper and lightly oil.
- 2 Put the flour into a large bowl, add the yeast and stir thoroughly. Add the salt and sugar and stir again. Add all the dried fruit and the orange zest and mix until all the fruit is lightly coated with flour and not sticking together.
- 3 Put half the milk into a saucepan, add the lard and heat gently until the lard has melted, then remove from the heat. Add the remaining milk – this should give you a tepid liquid. Gradually work the liquid into the flour mixture until you have a slightly sticky ball of dough. Cover with a damp tea towel and leave to rest for 30 minutes.
- 4 Turn the dough onto a lightly floured surface and knead until smooth and elastic. Return to the bowl and cover with the tea towel again. Leave somewhere warm to rise for about 1 hour.
- 5 When the dough has roughly doubled in size and quickly springs back if you press it with a finger, knead briefly to knock it back, then shape into a round and place in the cake tin. Cover again and leave for a further 40–45 minutes.
- 6 Preheat the oven to 200C/180C Fan/Gas 6.
- 7 When the dough is well risen, bake for 1–1 1/4 hours until well browned and springy to touch. Remove from the tin and while still warm, brush with the apricot jam. If using, arrange the flaked almonds around the edge.