

Fully Loaded Buttermilk Corn Cakes

Makes 3 or 4 servings (3 or 4 cakes per serving)

Brimming with bell pepper, jalapeño, black beans, and corn kernels, these pancakes are a reliable crowd-pleaser. (And if you want to serve a true crowd, know that it is very easy to multiply). Once the vegetables are minced, the rest comes together fast.

- Ideally, you will be making this with fresh, sweet corn recently shaved from the cobs. Frozen corn is also OK. Defrost it in a strainer under room-temperature tap water for about 25 seconds. Shake off the water and dry completely.
- Wash your hands, knife, and cutting board with warm, soapy water after handling the jalapeños (and before touching your face).
- To keep the pancakes warm, transfer them to a wire rack on a baking sheet in a 200°F oven until serving time. (The rack keeps them crisp.)

1 tablespoon olive oil

¼ cup finely minced red bell pepper

Up to ¼ cup finely minced jalapeño (optional)

2 cups corn kernels (from about 4 freshly shucked ears) or frozen corn, defrosted (see note)

¾ cup cooked black beans (about half a 15-ounce can, rinsed, drained, and dried)

¼ cup finely minced scallions

½ cup cornmeal

½ cup unbleached all-purpose flour

½ teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon baking powder

½ teaspoon baking soda

1 cup buttermilk

2 large eggs

Nonstick cooking spray

Up to 3 tablespoons unsalted butter

1. Heat a medium skillet over medium heat for about a minute, then add the oil and swirl to coat the pan. Toss in the bell pepper, jalapeño (if using), and corn and cook, stirring, over medium-low heat for about 10 minutes, or until the pepper is soft and everything is shiny. Remove from the heat, stir in the black beans and scallions, and set aside.
2. Combine the dry ingredients in a medium bowl and make a well in the center.
3. Measure the buttermilk into a 2-cup liquid measure. Add the eggs and beat with a fork or a small whisk until smooth.
4. Add the buttermilk mixture and the sautéed vegetables, scraping the pan to include all the oil, into the well in the center of the dry ingredients. Using a spoon or a

rubber spatula, stir from the bottom of the bowl until the dry ingredients are all moistened. Don't overmix; a few small lumps are OK.

5. Spray a skillet or griddle with nonstick spray and heat it over medium heat, then melt in a little butter and swirl to coat the pan. Heat for about 30 seconds (or long enough to make sure the pan is really hot). Use a $\frac{1}{4}$ -cup measure with a handle to scoop as many cakes as will fit in a single layer into the pan and fry for 2 to 3 minutes on each side, or until golden. Continue to cook in batches (adding butter as needed) until all the batter has been used.

6. Serve hot or warm, with any of the Optional Enhancements.