

## **Hushpuppies – A Southern-Fried Favorite**

The derivation of the word hushpuppies is somewhat varied. Here are two historical interpretations.

According to *The Encyclopedia of American Food & Drink*, John F. Mariani, Hush Puppy is defined as, “A dumpling of cornmeal that is deep-fried, and especially popular in the South.” The term appears in print for the first time in about 1915. Although unconfirmed, the common assumption regarding the hush puppy’s origin is that it dates from the period of scarcity following the Civil War, when cooks would toss scraps of corn batter to hungry dogs with the words “Hush Puppies!”

Now, the *Morris Dictionary of Word and Phrase Origins* cites a southern reader’s account that in the south, the aquatic reptile called the salamander, was often known as a “water dog” or “water puppy.” And, these deep-fried pieces of cornmeal dough were formed into sticks and called “hush puppies” because eating such lowly food was not something a southern wife would want known to her neighbors.

The bottom line is that no matter who you talk to or what you read, most will agree that the name has something to do with trying to quiet dogs down. The leftover batter was fried and fed to dogs at night after the dogs’ owners had already eaten.

### **Fisherman’s Quarters II – Thousands of Hushpuppies Served Weekly!**

Thousands of years ago, the Greeks and the Romans fried fritters in hot oil. Their mixes included flour, spices, eggs, milk and even honey. George Baxevanis, owner of Fisherman’s Quarters II, a busy family seafood restaurant located in Asheville, NC, is certainly qualified to speak about Hushpuppies – he serves thousands of them weekly.

“We make them a little bit differently than other seafood restaurants,” says Baxevanis. “We shape ours like donuts. We form them this way to speed up the cooking process and to get an evenly-cooked hushpuppy.”

And, when you cook as many hushpuppies as they do at Fisherman’s Quarter II, you can rest assured that this is the best way. To get the shape, his staff uses a tool that looks very much like a pancake batter dispenser.

So, through the years, hushpuppies have continued to be a strong hold in the south. No matter what their original derivation, they have evolved into a favorite at southern Calabash seafood restaurants throughout the southeast. Most hushpuppies are made with cornmeal and cornbread, spoon bread and fritters all fall into the same category as hushpuppies. No matter what you call them, they remain a southern favorite.

Enjoy this recipe and try them for yourself!

## **Hushpuppies**

*Serves 4*

- **Ingredients:**
- 2 cups yellow corn meal
- 1 cup plain flour
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon Sugar
- ½ teaspoon of paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon fresh ground pepper
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 2/3 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/8 cup bacon grease

Set up a frying pan with your favorite cooking oil. We use canola with a splash of peanut oil. Preheat the oil over medium heat. Mix all the dry ingredients together until well blended. Add the eggs, bacon fat, buttermilk and blend until smooth. Next, take a tablespoon and form the batter into an oval shape and slide into the hot oil. Be careful! Repeat until batter is gone. Cook until golden brown. Hushpuppies will float when done. Drain on paper. Serve with your favorite seafood!