

INDEPENDENCE ROCK FRUIT COBLER

Oregon Trail Pioneers didn't eat this well every night – but they did stop traveling and take time to do pies, cakes, and cobblers for a 4th of July celebration at or around Independence Rock.

12 Dutch Oven (approximately 10 plated servings, or 30 small sampler servings)

Filling:

6 cups fresh or 4 cups dried fruit – sliced. Okay to leave on peels. Apples, apricots, peaches, and berries all work well.

4 tablespoons butter

½ cup all purpose flour

2 tablespoons cinnamon

1 teaspoon nutmeg or mace or ginger

¾ cup sugar

Water as needed to re-hydrate if using dried fruit.

Topping:

1 cup all purpose flour

¼ cup whole wheat flour

1 teaspoon baking powder

½ teaspoon soda

2 tablespoons melted butter

Dash of salt

1 cup buttermilk

3 tablespoons cinnamon

Basic recipe for fruit cobbler:

1) Clean, slice, and prepare fruit by mixing with sugar (about two tablespoons per cup) in a mixing bowl and setting aside. Just before adding to cook pot, add melted butter and flour, and mix thoroughly. As you wish, add seasonings such as cinnamon, salt, nutmeg, or ginger to your taste.

2) Warm the cookpot, melt enough butter to coat the bottom, add fruit, and enough liquid to prevent the fruit from sticking to the pot, cover and stew the fruit until soft. Check occasionally and add water if needed to prevent the fruit from burning.

3) Prepare the topping, which will be “dump” poured or dropped from a spoon over the fruit. Combine one part flour, ½ part sugar, teaspoon per portion of baking powder, ½ teaspoon soda, dash of salt and stir in one part buttermilk, and dash of melted butter. Stir until well blended, smooth, and fairly elastic. You can get creative here and add spices such as cinnamon, nutmeg or ginger to your topping as you like.

4) When fruit mixture is bubbling and has some syrup like consistency, dump or spoon drop the topping on top of the fruit. You may need to remove the cover and let some of the liquid boil down before adding the topping. Once you have added the topping, sprinkle with additional sugar and cinnamon, if you like your topping sweet. Cover the pot. Shovel coals over lid, and keep up from the heat a bit.

5) Check occasionally to see when topping is lightly browned and firm.

Reminders:

Let food cool before serving – this stuff can reach very hot, mouth burning temperatures pretty quickly.

We serve this outside at National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center at Baker City, in a beautiful setting, to an audience that is here to have fun and learn about pioneers – so it's pretty hard to go wrong with the results! Have fun, and the food is almost guaranteed to taste good. If anyone complains, tell them the story about the Donner Party.