

A man with a beard and a dark shirt is focused on preparing a dish. He is pouring sesame seeds from a small glass jar into a white bowl with a blue floral pattern. The bowl contains a dark, saucy protein, possibly chicken, topped with sliced green onions. He is wearing a patterned apron. The background is a brick wall with a framed piece of quilted fabric. In the foreground, on a wooden cutting board, there is a large knife, a small ceramic pitcher with a dark liquid, and a small black bowl containing green onions.

# SOUTHERN » COOKING GLOBAL « FLAVORS

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# Slow-Cooked Classic Collard Greens and Skillet Cornbread

A cinnamon stick is the secret ingredient in my collards. Cinnamon is also a great addition to cornbread. My grandmother used to sprinkle a little cinnamon and sugar on top of her cornbread batter before baking it, just giving it a little extra sweetness. My first introduction to cornbread was a box of Jiffy corn muffin mix when I was a kid. I would add a little jalapeño to spice it up or maybe a little extra corn for texture. Try your own spin on it. One tip on the mother's milk is to make it overnight. You can put it on the stove over very low heat, and just let it go.

## INGREDIENTS

SERVES 6

### FOR THE MOTHER'S MILK (SMOKED HAM HOCK STOCK)

2½ pounds smoked ham hocks  
3 quarts water

### FOR THE COLLARD GREENS

8 ounces salt pork, cut into small dice or ground  
2½ to 3 quarts Mother's Milk (see above)  
2 pounds cooked and chopped smoked ham  
hock meat (reserved from Mother's Milk)  
1 cup apple cider vinegar  
½ cup packed light brown sugar  
2 cinnamon sticks  
1 teaspoon crushed red pepper  
2 large bunches collard greens (4 to 5 pounds  
total), leaves stemmed and chopped into  
1-inch pieces  
½ cup fried shallots, preferably Maesri  
¼ cup fried garlic, preferably Maesri  
1 tablespoon kosher salt

### FOR THE SKILLET CORNBREAD

8 ounces salt pork, ground with a meat grinder,  
or cut into small dice  
2 cups self-rising flour  
2 cups cornmeal  
2 cups fresh corn kernels (from about 2 ears)  
1 (15-ounce) can creamed corn  
¼ cup granulated sugar  
1 jalapeño pepper, chopped  
1 tablespoon kosher salt  
1½ cups buttermilk  
½ cup water  
4 large eggs  
½ cup (1 stick) salted butter, melted,  
plus 4 tablespoons (½ stick) for coating

# DIRECTIONS

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## Make the Mother's Milk

1. Place the smoked ham hocks in a large stockpot. Add the water and bring to a boil on high heat. Reduce the heat to low and cover with a lid. Cook for 6 hours.
2. Strain the mother's milk through a fine-mesh strainer into another large stockpot.
3. Remove the bone from the hocks and chop up the meat and fat; transfer to the stockpot.

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## Make the Collard Greens

1. Place the salt pork in a microwavable container and microwave on high for 3 minutes. Stir and microwave for another 3 minutes. The fat will render and the meat will become salty, crispy bits (cracklings).
2. Transfer the rendered fat and cracklings to the stockpot of mother's milk and ham hock meat. Add the apple cider vinegar, brown sugar, cinnamon sticks, and crushed red pepper.
3. Bring to a boil on high heat and add the collard greens. Stir thoroughly.
4. Cover with a lid, reduce the heat to low, and cook for 3 hours. The greens will darken and become tender.
5. Add the fried shallots, fried garlic, and salt and simmer for 1 hour, until the greens are very tender. Keep warm, covered, until ready to serve.

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## Make the Skillet Cornbread

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. Place the salt pork in a microwavable container and microwave for 3 minutes. Stir and microwave for another 3 minutes.
3. Pour the rendered pork fat into a large cast-iron skillet. Reserve the cracklings.
4. Combine the flour, cornmeal, fresh corn kernels, creamed corn, sugar, jalapeño, reserved salt pork cracklings, and salt in a large bowl. Add the buttermilk, water, eggs, and melted butter. Mix until the batter is slightly smooth.
5. Place the cast-iron skillet in the oven and heat for 5 minutes.
6. Carefully remove the skillet from the oven and pour in the batter. Return the skillet to the oven and bake for 15 minutes.
7. Rotate the skillet and bake for another 9 minutes, or until the cornbread is golden brown and firm to the touch. A toothpick inserted into the center should come out clean.
8. Rub the top of the baked cornbread with the half stick of butter. Cool to room temperature.

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## The Build

Put a large helping of the greens into a bowl and serve with a wedge of cornbread. Plate the remaining servings.

