Cod and Sweetcorn Cracker-Top Bake

One 8×12 in (20×30 cm) fish bake, at least 3 qt/2.8 L;4 portions, each with boiled potatoes · Active 30 min · Total 1 hr 15 min

Ingredients

- 1 lb 2 oz waxy potatoes, peeled and cut in 1-in/2.5-cm pieces (500 g prepared)
- 6 cups water (1.4 L), for potatoes
- 3 tablespoons butter (45 g), divided:2 tablespoons/30 g for sauce and 1 tablespoon/15 g for crackers
- 1 small onion, finely chopped (120 g)
- 2 celery stalks, finely diced (100 g)
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour (25 g)
- 1 1/2 cups milk (360 ml)
- 1/2 cup low-sodium vegetable stock (120 ml)
- 1 3/4 cups frozen sweetcorn (240 g)
- 1 lb 5 oz skinless boneless cod, thawed if frozen, cut in 1-in/2.5-cm pieces (600 g)
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 1/2 oz plain crackers, roughly crushed (70 g)

Set out

Oven, 8×12 in (20×30 cm) baking dish, at least 3 qt/2.8 L, Large potato saucepan, 12-in/30-cm deep skillet, Colander, Whisk, Small microwave-safe bowl or pan for melting butter, Rimmed baking sheet, Suitable foil if needed, Food thermometer

Allergens

Fish: cod, Milk, Wheat, Celery; check cracker and stock labels. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Heat oven to 400°F (205°C). Put the dish on a rimmed sheet. Bring potatoes and their water to a boil, simmer 15–18 minutes until tender, drain and keep covered and hot.

2. Meanwhile melt 30 g butter in the skillet over medium-low heat. Cook onion and celery 8–10 minutes until soft. Stir in flour 1 minute, gradually whisk in milk and stock, then add corn and pepper. Simmer 5–6 minutes, or the corn packet time if longer, stirring until corn is cooked and sauce thickened.

3. Fold cod pieces into the simmering sauce. Cook gently 5–7 minutes, turning carefully, until several thick pieces reach 145°F (63°C). Transfer the hot mixture to the baking dish without breaking the fish up.

4. Melt remaining 15 g butter safely in the small bowl or pan. Mix with crushed crackers and scatter over the fish. Bake 10–15 minutes until topping is lightly golden and the center and several other spots reach 165°F (74°C). Shield loosely if needed while the center finishes.

5. Rest 3 minutes. Serve one-quarter of the fish bake with one-quarter of the potatoes.

Use the potatoes as the side

Divide the 500 g potato batch among the four plates. Bread or rice is unnecessary to complete the stated meal and would be a separate addition.

A useful detail

The 75-minute total includes preparing fish and vegetables, overlapping potatoes with the sauce and a short oven stage. Cod reaches 145°F (63°C) in the sauce; the assembled casserole is then checked at 165°F (74°C). Do not extend the bake solely to darken crackers.

Keep it well

Refrigerate fish bake and potatoes in shallow containers within 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90°F (32°C), at 40°F (4°C) or below. Use within 2 days or an earlier ingredient deadline. Reheat both to 165°F (74°C). Refrigeration is preferable to freezing this milk sauce and cooked fish; crackers soften after storage.