

Job Carr Cabin Museum

Hard Tack

Try this easy pioneer recipe at home!

Hard tack is a simple and inexpensive bread dough. It dries into a long-lasting cracker or biscuit. This was a staple in the diet of sailors, Civil War soldiers, and pioneers along the Oregon Trail.

This recipe also makes an easy no-bake play dough that will keep for up to 2 weeks in a sealed storage bag.

Ingredients

½ cup flour
¼ cup salt
¼ cup water

Preheat oven to 375 F.

Equipment

Large wooden or plastic bowl
Set of measuring cups
Rolling pin
Tooth pick
Cookie sheet

Mix flour and salt in large bowl using your hands. Add just enough water so the mixture will stick together, producing dough that won't stick to your hands or rolling pin. Mix the dough by hand. Roll the dough into a ball using your hands. Knead the dough on a board and shape as desired.

For a traditional style, roll the dough to about ½ inch thick and cut into 3x3 inch squares. Press a pattern of four rows of four holes into each square using tooth pick. The appearance is similar to a thick saltine cracker.

Preheat oven to 375. Place the squares on an ungreased cookie sheet and bake for 30 minutes. Flip each square over and bake another 30 minutes. The crackers should be slightly brown on both sides.

The fresh crackers are easily broken, but harden as they dry. To soften, try dipping them in tea or soup.



Making hard tack dough at the annual Pioneer Days Festival in Tacoma's Old Town Park