

Sweet corn makes you grin from ear to ear

The path to perfect sweet corn begins with selecting a high-quality ear, identifying the best way to prepare it and creating finishing touches that add new flair to this staple of summer flavor.

The Council for Biotechnology Information has a few suggestions to help you find and prepare that perfect ear.

BUYING: Look for bright green, moist husks and stiff, dark silk when selecting corn and make sure you can feel individual kernels by pressing gently against the husk.

KEEPING FRESH: After selecting a good ear, cook and serve the corn that same day or refrigerate in the husks until ready to eat. As soon as corn is picked, the sugar gradually begins to convert to starch, reducing the crop's natural sweetness. For supermarket corn (who knows when it was picked) or fresh-picked farmers market corn you are not going to eat immediately, add 1 teaspoon of sugar for each quart of water used in cooking to replace the lost sweetness.

PREPARING:

Boiling: Remove husks and silk from the corn and place the ears in a pot large enough to hold the amount desired. Cover the pot, bring water to a boil and wait 3 to 5 minutes, or until kernels are very hot.

Grilling: Pull back the husk just enough to remove the silk. Soak corn in water for 1 to 3 hours to keep it from drying out and prevent the husk from completely charring. Grill for about 10 to 15 minutes, turning often.

Baking: Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F and prepare the same as grilling. Bake 20 to 25 minutes, or until corn is tender when pierced and very hot.

Microwaving: Husk the corn, discard silk and rinse off before wrapping each ear loosely in a paper towel. Cook for 1 to 2 minutes or until ears are hot to the touch.

For corn lovers who are looking for delightful dipping oils, these recipes are perfect for drizzling some extra flavor onto corn or bread. Heart-healthy canola oil can spice up sweet corn without adding trans fat or large amounts of saturated fat.

Indian Summer

1/4 cup canola oil
1/4 tsp. chili flakes
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. cumin
1/4 tsp. ground coriander

Herbs & Vinegar

1/4 cup canola oil
1 tsp. rosemary
1 tsp. basil
1 tsp. garlic powder
1/4 tsp salt
1/4 tsp. chili flakes
2 tsp. balsamic vinegar