



Reinvent

a Summer Favorite

Believe it or not, the early colonists in America turned up their noses at corn, deeming it fit only for livestock. Thankfully enough, Native Americans brought them to their senses. Today, a summer barbecue wouldn't be the same without corn on the cob.

By late spring and early summer, farmers' markets, roadside produce stands, and the produce section of most supermarkets are loaded with it. Here in Louisiana, we like it spicy straight out of a crawfish, crab, or shrimp boil. It's a key ingredient to the ubiquitous Louisiana dish, macque choux, and our beloved corn and crab/shrimp/crawfish bisque.

Who doesn't like corn on the cob dripping in melted butter and a little salt? We suggest you go a step further: at your next cookout set up a grilled corn on the cob topping bar — the more options the better.

With a little creativity and experimentation, you will come to appreciate a number of new and delicious ways to dress up those sweet, juicy ears with unexpected toppings. ♦

Cream Cheese, Pepper Jelly, and Caramelized Onion with Fresh Basil

Spread a tablespoon or two of softened cream cheese over hot grilled corn and drizzle with warmed pepper jelly. Add a spoonful of diced caramelized onions and top with sliced fresh basil leaves.

Goat Cheese, Cherry Preserves, and Crumbled Bacon

Spread a tablespoon or two of softened goat cheese over hot grilled corn. Top with warmed preserves and sprinkle generously with crisp crumbled bacon and fresh spring herbs. We used cherry preserves; personal preference rules here.

Gorgonzola, Apricot Preserves, and Crumbled Bacon

Spread a tablespoon or two of apricot preserves over hot grilled corn. Turn the cob to coat entirely as the preserves melt from the heat. Top with crisp crumbled bacon and a generous sprinkling of crumbled Gorgonzola or another blue cheese.

Caramel Corn

Sometimes the simplest is best. While grilling, drizzle a small amount of honey over corn several times during cooking, especially after turning. Some honey made drip off, but after 5 or 6 coats, you'll be left with a delicious treat. Serve warm topped with a small pat of butter.



Corn on the Cob Macque Choux

Sauté 1 sliced yellow onion and 1 sliced bell pepper until browned. Add 4 ounces finely chopped tasso (or bacon, etc.) and 2 minced garlic cloves and sauté. Add ½ stick of butter and ½ teaspoon Cajun seasoning; melt butter. Spoon over hot grilled corn and serve immediately.

Chili Lime with Crema

Sprinkle hot grilled corn with a little salt, chili powder, and cumin. Drizzle with crema and chopped purple onions; finish with a squeeze of lime. (Crema is Mexican sour cream; slightly less acidic and a bit saltier than American sour cream.)



Hot Peppers and Goat Cheese

Sauté sliced hot peppers (we used red jalapeños) in hot oil until sweated. Place over hot grilled corn and finish with crumbled goat cheese and bacon, if you are not already sick of it!

Loaded: Cheese, Bacon, Sour Cream, and Chives

Sprinkle finely shredded Cheddar over hot corn immediately after taking it off the grill. Whisk a small amount of milk into sour cream until it is thin enough to pour; drizzle over melted cheese. Top with crisp crumbled bacon and a generous sprinkling of thinly sliced chives.

All About Corn

Origins

Corn is a domesticated descendant of the wild grass teosinte, native to what is today southern Mexico. Domestication began 6,000 to 10,000 years ago, according to researchers at the University of California at Irvine. For more on the a-maize-ing history of corn, visit the National Science Foundation, [nsf.gov/news](https://www.nsf.gov/news).

When buying fresh corn, look for cobs with the husks intact. Husks should be green, kernels should be densely packed, and smaller on the tips of the cob — indicating young corn.

Storing

Corn should be eaten as soon as possible after it has been picked. Once picked, corn's sugars convert to starch more rapidly, actually decreasing its sweetness. If keeping fresh corn for more than a day before preparing and eating, parboil the cobs for 1 minute — this will slow down the conversion of the sugars to starches, preserving that delicious sweetness.

Preparation Tips

To easily remove the husk and silks, cut through the husk at the large end of the corn and squeeze it from the husk; rub with a paper towel to quickly remove the silks.

To boil fresh corn, place in boiling unsalted water for 3 to 10 minutes, depending on the condition of the corn and personal preference; older corn will take longer to cook. Salted water will toughen the kernels.

To grill fresh corn, preheat the grill to high. Soak the unhusked corn in ice water for 10 minutes. Remove the husk and silks and lightly coat the corn with oil or cooking spray. Evenly arrange over hot grill and cook until tender and browned in some areas, rotating frequently over cold and hot spots to allow it to cook evenly.

Once your corn is cooked as you desire, add butter and season with salt and pepper — or go all in with some of our following suggestions.

If there are any leftovers, slice the kernels from the cob for use in salsas and cold summer salads, or stir into hush puppy batter or grits.

Topping Tips

Melted butter, softened cream cheese or goat cheese, or most anything with a spreadable consistency will work as a base to help chunkier toppings adhere. Rule of thumb: Anything that tastes good on a baked potato will taste just as great on grilled corn. No surprise, bacon and corn go very well together.

Share your favorites with us:
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