

## Corn

**What is corn?** Is it a vegetable...grain...starchy vegetable? Yes, to all. Classified as a grain, but also a vegetable, this food does double duty. It grows in "ears," each of which is covered in rows of kernels that are then protected by the silk-like threads called "corn silk" and encased in a husk. Its traditional name is *maize* by which it was known to the Native Americans as well as many other cultures throughout the world. Although it is often associated with the color yellow, it actually comes in host of different varieties featuring an array of different colors—red, pink, black, purple, white, and blue.



**Selection:** To find the best corn, look for fresh green husks and soft silk. Husks should envelope the ear and not fit too loosely around it. Silk-ends should be absent of decay and stem ends should not be discolored or dried. To examine the kernels, pull back on part of the husk. Kernels should look moist, plump, bright in color, and tightly arranged in rows. Avoid ears with underdeveloped or overdeveloped kernels or those with yellowed, wilted or dried husks.

**Storage:** Traditionally to enjoy the optimal sweetness of fresh corn, it was recommended to eat it the day of purchase. New varieties allow you 3 days to still enjoy its full flavor. Store corn in an air-tight container or tightly wrapped plastic bag in the refrigerator if you do not intend to cook it on the day of purchase. Do not remove its husk since this will protect its flavor. Fresh corn freezes well if placed in heavy-duty freezer bags. To prepare whole ears for freezing, blanch them first for five minutes depending. If you just want to freeze the kernels, first blanch the ears and then cut the kernels off the cob at about three-quarters of their depths. Frozen whole corn on the cob will keep for up to one year, while the kernels can be frozen for two to three months.

**Nutrients/nutrition:** Consider a medium-sized ear of corn to be one serving. 1 cup of cooked corn = 177 calories, 5 grams of fiber, and ~17% of the daily vitamin C requirement. Anyone who has eaten fresh corn-on-the-cob or freshly popped popcorn knows how satisfying this food can be to chew. Some of that satisfaction comes from corn's fiber content and aids in overall digestion. With 5 grams of fiber per cup, corn is a good fiber source.

**Preparation:** To shuck the corn, pull the husks down the ear and snap off the stem at the base. Under cold running water, use a vegetable brush and rub the ear in a circular motion to remove the silk. Corn can be roasted/grilled, boiled, or steamed. For roasting/grilling...pull back the husks (but don't remove entirely). Soak the corn in 5 minutes. Place the corn on the grill and cook, turning occasionally, ~15 to 20 minutes. For oven roasting, place the ears of corn in the oven at 375 and cook for ~20-30 minutes. For steamed corn, place in 1 inch of water, cover tightly and bring to simmer. Cook time is ~6 to 10 minutes. If using the boiling method, then add husked ears of corn to a pot of boiling water, cover, and turn off the heat. Let stand for up to 10 minutes.