



January 2015

FN/FoodPreparation/2015-01pr

How to Grill Sweet Corn

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The smell of corn cooking on the grill quickly brings everyone to the dinner table. When selecting ears to grill, use the highest quality ears. Select young corn with bright green husks to grill (*Figure 1*). Young corn is full of natural sugars which will caramelize over the heat of the grill.



Figure 1 Young sweet corn

Remove one or two of the outer layers of husk. Wash with water. With husks still on, soak in cold water for 15 or 20 minutes, even up to 1 hour. Soak in a large pan, the sink, or an ice chest (*Figure 2*). Make sure ears are submerged. The water changes to steam during grilling and makes the corn extra juicy when cooked. Remove from water and shake off excess water. If corn is fresh with bright green pliable husks and you don't have time to soak it in water, you can just put it on the grill.



Figure 2 Soaking corn in water

Put corn on a medium grill, 350-400F, for 15-20 minutes, giving each ear one quarter turn every 5 minutes so each side gets grilled (*Figure 3*). The charring husks add smoky flavor to the corn. The corn is done when most of the husks are slightly charred (*Figure 4*). Check by piercing with a fork—corn should be tender and ooze clear liquid (*Figure 5*).



Figure 3 Turn corn when grill side is charred



Figure 4 Corn is done when all sides are charred



Figure 5 Check for doneness with a fork

Remove from grill and let stand for about 5 minutes to cool slightly. Use an oven mitt or gloves to pull back husks (*Figure 6*). Cooked silks will peel off easily. You can use the stalk and pulled back husks as a handle or completely remove the husks. The charred husk adds to the presentation and flavor when serving (*Figure 7*).



Figure 6 Use gloves to peel back husks



Figure 7

Add butter, spices as desired, and enjoy. Grilling in the husks is very simple. There are some variations on this method (*Figure 8*).



Figure 8 Different preparation options

Some Preparation Options

1. Don't soak corn in water, simply remove the first couple of layers of husk and put on grill.
2. Peel back husk, remove silks before grilling (*Figure 9*), pull husks back onto cob (*Figure 10*) and tie with a piece of husk or string (*Figure 11*). Optional, brush corn with olive oil or butter or spices before replacing husks. Grill as above.
3. Remove silks and husks completely, wrap corn in aluminum foil (*Figure 12*). Grill as above. Corn will cook quicker than with husks on.
4. Remove silks and husks and put corn directly on grill (*Figure 13*). Turn frequently until charred and cooked, about 10 minutes. Corn cooks a little quicker than with husks on. Corn will be drier than if soaked in water and cooked in husks.



Figure 9 Removing silks



Figure 10 Replace husks after removing silks



Figure 11 Tie husks with piece of husk or string



Figure 12 Wrapping corn with foil



Figure 13 Put husked corn directly on grill



Figure 14 Mexican Corn on the Cob. Courtesy of iStock.

Mexican Corn on the Cob

- 6 ears of fresh corn
- 6 T mayo
- 6 lime wedges
- Chili powder
- 1 C grated Cotija, parmesan, or queso fresco cheese

Grill corn using one of the methods discussed above. Remove husks and cover with mayo using a knife. Roll in grated cheese and add chili powder or other spices as desired. To finish, squeeze a lime wedge over the corn. Enjoy.

Easy Corn on the Cob in a Microwave

Fresh corn can be cooked in the microwave using the natural moisture in the corn. Place one unhusked corn in microwave oven and cook for 2-2 ½ minutes on high. Turn corn over and cook on high for another 2-2 ½ minutes until steaming. Add 3-4 minutes for each additional ear. Remove from oven and let stand for 5 minutes. Using a hot pad or folded towel, place corn on a cutting board and cut off the bottom ½ inch of kernels. Grasp the ear at the top and squeeze the ear of corn out of the husk from top to bottom. With a little practice, this method will leave the husks and silk behind and the corn is ready to eat.

References

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