

At last local sweet corn is abundant, and it's time to prepare some fast summer dishes that celebrate its arrival. We'll start with stovetop or backyard grilled corn-on-the-cob and some simple but delicious toppings for it, then move on to main-course dishes:

Corn-Tomato-Black Bean Salad  
Corn Fritters  
Summer Corn Soup

### Basic Grilled Corn

*If you don't have a backyard grill, don't despair—stovetop grilling yields the wonderfully smoky flavor of an outside grill too. Either way, start by soaking your ears of corn, still in their shucks, for 20 minutes in cold water. In the meantime, heat up your grill (on a stovetop, set the grill over medium-high heat; on the outdoors grill, wait till the coals have turned gray).*

*Lay the ears on the heated grill and allow them to steam for 20 minutes, turning them until they become browned and striped by the grill's bars. If you want them to have a popcorn-y flavor, peel back the husks and allow them to cook naked for another 3–5 minutes. At this point, you can either anoint the ears with one of the flavorings below or cut the kernels off the ears for use in our other recipes. Note that 1 ear of corn yields 1/3–1/2 c. of kernels.*

### Three Toppings for Grilled Corn-on-the-Cob

*While just butter and salt is perfectly acceptable, these toppings spice things up a bit!*

*Chipotle and cilantro:* Smash a small handful of fresh cilantro leaves and a garlic clove to a pulp; add extra-virgin olive oil to make a loose mixture; add about 1/4 tsp. sea salt and chipotle powder to taste.

*Cheese, pepper, and lime juice:* Use finely grated cheddar or crumbled feta for this. Stir 1/2 c. cheese into 1/2 c. of mayonnaise or melted butter. Squeeze juice of 1/2 or a whole lime into mixture; add powdered chipotle or cayenne pepper and salt to taste.

*Cayenne pepper:* Smash 1/2 tsp. ground cayenne pepper and 1 Tbsp. fresh ginger; add 1/2 tsp. salt and stir mixture into 1/4 c. of unrefined peanut oil or extra-virgin olive oil.

### Corn-Tomato-Black Bean Salad

*This is a very simple summer dinner salad best served at room temperature. It makes use of many of summer's best offerings: fresh corn, tomatoes, new red onions, basil or cilantro.*

Serves 2

Ingredients:     3 c. black beans (2-15 oz. can, rinsed and drained or 1 c. dried beans cook up to 3 c.)  
                         1/2 large fresh red onion, thinly sliced or chopped  
                         2 fresh tomatoes, seeded and coarsely chopped  
                         1 small fresh jalapeño, finely chopped  
                         1–2 cloves of garlic, smashed or minced  
                         1 c. grilled corn kernels (2 ears' yield)  
                         1/2 c. chopped fresh Italian parsley  
                         1/2 c. fresh basil leaves, sliced in ribbons, or 1/2 c. fresh cilantro leaves, coarsely chopped  
                         1/3 c. extra-virgin olive oil  
                         1/2 tsp. salt\*  
                         Freshly ground black pepper  
                         2 Tbs. fresh lime juice

- Place cooked black beans, onion, tomato, jalapeño, garlic, corn kernels, and parsley in salad bowl. Mix lightly.
- Add basil or cilantro leaves; toss lightly with hands.
- Whisk together olive oil, salt, pepper and lime juice. Add it to salad, then lightly toss. Taste and adjust for seasonings.

*\* The amount of salt depends on whether you cook dried beans or start with canned ones. Dried beans should not be cooked with salt in the water, because it increases cooking time significantly. Most canned black beans already contain significant amounts of salt. The 1/2 tsp. specified here assumes that you are using canned, drained beans.*

## **Corn Fritters**

*In the dog days of August, these quickly made fritters and a small salad of frisée, lettuces, and avocado are all you need for a light, satisfying meal.*

Serves 2

Ingredients: 3/4 c. all-purpose flour  
1 tsp. baking powder  
1/2 tsp. sea salt  
1/2 tsp. black pepper, freshly ground  
1/4 tsp. powdered cayenne  
1 Tbsp. finely chopped cilantro, basil, or thyme  
1 egg, separated  
1/4 c. milk, plus 1 Tbsp.  
3/4 tsp. extra-virgin olive oil (EVOO)  
Kernels from 2–3 ears of grilled corn  
More EVOO for frying\*

- Combine flour, baking powder, salt, pepper, cayenne, and fresh herbs.
- Beat egg yolk into milk and olive oil; set aside.
- Beat egg white until it forms stiff peaks.
- Fold dry mixture into egg yolk-milk-EVOO mixture; mix lightly, only until they are combined. Gently fold in beaten egg whites. *Do not beat these in; it's fine for uncombined whites to peek through the mixture. If you beat the mixture rather than lightly fold it, your fritters will be heavy and greasy.*
- Very gently fold in the corn.
- Heat cast-iron or other heavy skillet to medium-high. Add enough EVOO to cover the bottom of the pan, but don't pour in a pool of it! Wait until you can see the oil shimmer: now it's hot enough to cook your fritters.
- Drop heaping tablespoons of batter into the skillet, but don't crowd them, or the temperature will drop too much and your fritters will become heavy and greasy. Fry them on one side until they're golden, then turn them over. Take them out with a slotted spoon or spatula.
- Place on newspaper or paper towels to drain, and serve immediately.

*\* You are not deep-frying, so the temperature at which the fritters fry is compatible with extra-virgin olive oil. It's tastier and healthier than lower grades, so use it here.*

## **Summer Corn Soup**

*There isn't anything that's much nicer than a corn chowder made with fresh corn and sweet little grade B potatoes—and both are plentiful at Mississippi Market in August. Because this is an all-vegetable soup, it will keep in the fridge for 4–5 days. A small salad and slice of very good bread are all you need for a perfect summer meal.*

Serves 2 for 2 meals.

Ingredients: 1 1/2 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil (EVOO) or unsalted butter  
1 small red onion, thinly sliced  
1 stalk of celery, chopped crosswise into 1/4-inch pieces  
5–6 grade B red or yellow (waxy) potatoes, peel left on, cut in fourths  
1 dried bay leaf  
2 c. water  
1 tsp. fresh thyme  
1 c. milk  
Kernels from 4 ears of grilled corn  
1/2 sweet red pepper, seeded, coarsely chopped  
1/2 tsp. red pepper flakes (optional)  
1/2 c. heavy cream (optional)

1/2–1 Tbsp. sea salt  
Black pepper, freshly ground  
1 Tbsp. butter  
3–4 fresh basil leaves

- Heat a heavy soup pot on medium, and then add EVOO or butter. When the fat has become hot, add red onion and turn heat down to medium-low. Cook for about 20 minutes, stirring occasionally—you want the onion to soften and brown, which will give it a delicious depth and flavor.
- Add celery and cook another 5 minutes.
- Add potatoes and bay leaf and water just to cover. Simmer for about 20 minutes or until potatoes are cooked through.
- Add thyme, milk, corn, red pepper, and pepper flakes; cook until red pepper is tender (about 10 minutes).
- If you want a thick, very creamy soup, add heavy cream at this point, and bring up heat to incorporate it. (*Heavy cream does not separate when boiled or heated on high; cream labeled WHIPPING CREAM does.*)
- Taste for seasoning; the soup will probably taste very flat, because potatoes are salt sinks. Add salt bit by bit until you like the flavor. Grind in some black pepper and add butter; stir until it melts.
- Stack 3–4 basil leaves, roll them up, and slice them thinly on the diagonal. When you serve the soup, sprinkle the basil ribbons on top.