



FARMERS MARKET

Camarillo Certified Farmers Market

Supporting grief and bereavement services at Camarillo Hospice:
A program of Livingston Memorial Visiting Nurse Association



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A Brief History

Corn, a.k.a. maize, is actually a grass native to Central and South America. Corn was probably first cultivated in Mexico, where archeological evidence points to the first human-grown corn dating from 5500 BC. Cultivation of the grain then spread North to New Mexico and South to Peru, then to other regions of South America. It eventually became an important staple food in much of South, Central and North America.

Now here is where things get interesting: there is some controversy as to how corn got to the New World, at least according to The Oxford Companion to Food. One theory holds that Columbus brought corn back to Spain when he returned to Europe, after which it spread to the rest of Europe, to Africa, and then to the Middle East and on to China and India. A much more controversial theory holds that corn arrived in the Old World long before 1492, based on linguistic evidence and recorded accounts of travelers. This second hypothesis would mean that there was enough contact between the Old and the New Worlds to introduce corn cultivation prior to Columbus' "discovery" of the Americas.



Factual Nibbles

- An ear of corn always has an even number of rows.
- Popcorn has been found New Mexican archaeological remains dating from the first millennium BC.
- Eating corn with beans provides all of the amino acids that humans need, as corn is high in methionine but lacking in lysine, while beans are high in lysine but lacking in methionine.
- Huitlachoche, a fungus that grows on corn (also known by the naughty-sounding term "corn smut"), is a delicacy in Mexico. The fungus has an earthy flavor reminiscent of mushrooms.
- In addition to the familiar yellow and white types, corn heirloom varieties come in number of other colors, including blue, red, black and green.
- To make things really confusing, the word "corn" is used outside of the US to refer to most any staple cereal crop. Maize is used to describe what we Americans refer to as "corn."

Quick Corn, Tomato and Basil Sauté

Try this recipe — a super simple and quick sauté of corn and other veggies that are at their peak in the summer. Try mixing it up with different types of basil (Thai basil is especially nice with corn), or add a slice of finely diced bacon before you add the garlic and jalapeño. Fresh lima beans or diced green beans would be a nice addition, too.

Ingredients:

4 large fresh ears of corn, husked and de-silked
1 tablespoon butter
1 clove garlic, finely minced
1 fresh jalapeño, finely minced (optional)
Kosher salt
Freshly ground pepper
1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved if small, quartered if large
Lime or lemon juice
1/2 cup fresh basil leaves

Directions:

1. Using a sharp knife, remove the corn kernels from the cob. (See "Pro Tip," above.) Set corn kernels aside.
2. In a large, heavy sauté pan, heat the butter on medium heat until foamy.
3. Add the garlic and jalapeño and cook and stir until the garlic becomes fragrant, about 1 minute. (Do not let the garlic brown.)
4. Add the corn kernels, a generous pinch of salt and a few grindings of fresh pepper. Cook and stir for 3-4 minutes.
5. Add the cherry tomatoes and stir until just heated through, about 1 minute.
6. Turn the heat off and add a squeeze of lime or lemon juice. Taste and correct for salt and pepper.
7. Tear the basil leaves into 2-3 pieces if large (or leave whole if small). Add to the corn-and-tomato mixture. Serve immediately.

Serves 4 as a side dish.