How to Cook Sweet Corn: 5 Simple Ways

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It’s getting close! The time of year when the sweet corn is ready to eat! Dad always planted sweet corn when he planted the field corn. I remember going and checking to see if the corn was ready. We always put an electric fence around it to keep the coons and deer out. Sometimes they would find a way anyway.

Few things symbolize the peak of summer more than a crop of fresh sweet corn. Whether you grow it or buy it at the farmer’s market, grocery store or at a stand on the side of the road, the real challenge arises once you get your bounty home. What’s the best way to cook corn? Here are five different methods used to cook sweet corn: grilling, boiling, steaming, slow-cooking and oven-roasting.

Grilled Corn
Begin by preheating your gas or charcoal grill. Place each ear of shucked corn on a 12-inch square piece of heavy-duty foil. Top with a tablespoon of butter and a standard-size ice cube. Then, wrap each ear tightly and grill over high heat for roughly 20 minutes.

Pros: Corn on the grill gets infused with smoky grill flavor! The kernels get some char while still remaining sweet and juicy.

Cons: Grilled corn takes longer to cook than other methods except slow cooker.

Note: You can also grill corn with the husk on to protect the corn from the heat of the grill and infuse the corn with moisture.

Boiled Corn
Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Then carefully place ears of shucked corn into the hot water. Cover the pot with a lid and let cook until the corn is tender; about 3-5 minutes.

Pros: Sweet corn can be boiled in a few minutes.

Cons: It’s easy to overcook corn when boiled. When overcooked, sweet corn can become tough and lose some of its sweetness.

Note: Never add salt to corn when boiling. The trace amounts of calcium in salt can cause corn to toughen while it boils. You can add a bit of sugar to enhance its sweetness, though.

Steamed Corn
To steam corn on the stovetop, place a steamer basket into a pot filled with a few inches of water. Bring the water to a boil and then add shucked ears of corn to the steamer basket. Cover. Let cook for 4-6 minutes, or until tender. Remove and season with salt, pepper and melted butter.

Pros: This method is quick, and healthy, too. It’s because steaming preserves the corn’s nutrients better than other methods.

Cons: There are no cons with stovetop steaming.

Slow Cooker Corn
To prepare corn in a slow cooker, remove the husks from the corn and place in a 6- to 8-quart slow cooker. Add 1 cup of water plus butter, herbs or spices. Then cover and cook on high for 2-3 hours, or until tender.

Pros: This method works for large gatherings.

Cons: Time is obviously a factor. Allow 2 to 3 hours to cook.
**Roasted Corn**

Preheat oven to 400°F. Place each ear of shucked corn on a 12-inch square piece of heavy-duty foil. Place 1 tablespoon of unsalted butter on top of each ear and then wrap the corn tightly in foil. Place corn on a baking sheet and transfer to the preheated oven. Roast on your oven’s center rack for 30-45 minutes.

**Pros:** Corn steams perfectly in its foil wrapping, leaving each kernel juicy, sweet and tender. Corn prepared in the oven stays piping hot while wrapped in foil for up to 20 minutes.

**Cons:** Oven-roasted corn takes up oven space so plan accordingly.

**How to Shuck Corn, Microwave Style!**

If you’re not big on shucking corn by hand or need to get the job done fast, it’s time to turn to your trusty microwave. The process is virtually effortless. First, cut off the bottom of the corn cob, where the stalk meets the first row of kernels. Pop the corn on a microwave-safe plate and zap the ears for about 30 to 60 seconds on high heat. Once the time’s up, remove the plate (watch your hands!) then hold the corn by its uncut end. Give it a firm shake and the cob should slide out, leaving the husk and silk behind. Continue to cook using one of the above methods.

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