

Seasonal Eating
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Cornbread and Barbecued Chicken
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There's nothing more Americana than barbecued chicken. Bone-in, skin-on pieces of tender chicken slathered in barbecue sauce and grilled to sticky glazed perfection. I remember growing up and visiting my grandparents. My Grandmother would tell my Grandfather to watch the chicken carefully and make sure it didn't have a speck of black on it from the grill. Well, that never turned out exactly as she wanted as it was always a little, or a lot, blackened. But we loved it and ate every finger licking morsel.

One of my favorite sides for barbecued chicken is cornbread. There just seems to be an affinity of love between corn and barbecue sauce. Maybe its because they both have a sweetness that I love. Maybe its that they both scream summertime. Whatever it is, a piece of cornbread is perfect along with the potato salad or slaw.



Summer cornbread needs to be full of summer goodness and the start is putting some fresh corn kernels (or thawed frozen in a pinch) in the batter. It ramps up the texture and adds a little more sweetness and corn flavor. I used two ears to cut the kernels off to make 1 cup for the recipe. If you don't want the kernels flying around everywhere when you cut them off, place the point of the ear in the middle tube of a Bundt pan and cut down the ear. The kernels fall into the pan and don't scatter around the kitchen making for easier cleanup (and less kernel loss!).

And then summer calls for a little heat – in this case in the form of some salsa, peppers and onions. You can use a jalapeno or if you want a little less heat, try a poblano pepper. Poblanos are the larger, darker green peppers. Traditionally used for chile rellenos, these are a little tamer than the jalapenos but still carry a little heat. I used a half a poblano pepper in my cornbread this time, as they didn't have any jalapenos at the store. You can also vary the heat by the type of salsa you use – mild, medium or hot.

By the way, my Grandmother may have been right. According to USDA and the National Cancer Institute, some studies suggest there may a cancer risk related to eating food cooked by high-heat cooking techniques as grilling, frying and broiling. These studies are inconclusive right now and no federal recommendations have been made concerning the chemicals formed when meats are charred (or burned). Based on present research findings, eating moderate amounts of grilled meats like fish, meat and poultry cooked – without charring or burning – to a safe temperature does not pose a problem. If you want to be on the safe side until further research is done, you can follow these tips to prevent charring:

- *remove visible fat that can cause a flare up
- *pre-cook the meat in the microwave just before putting on the grill to release some of the fat and juices
- *cook food in the center of the grill and move coals to the side

*flip the meat often

*cut off any charred (burned) portions of the meat before eating

So watch your chicken and the next time you fire up the grill, try this flavor packed Summer Cornbread on the side. For more information and recipes check out the Seasonal Eating page at bedford.tennessee.edu.

Summer Cornbread

2 tablespoons chopped onion

1 jalapeño pepper, seeded and minced (or half a poblano)

4 tablespoons vegetable oil, divided

1 cup flour

1 cup plain yellow cornmeal

2 tablespoons sugar

4 teaspoons baking powder

1/2 teaspoon salt

2 eggs

1 cup milk

1 cup fresh or frozen (thawed) corn kernels

1/3 cup shredded sharp Cheddar cheese

1/4 cup salsa

2 tablespoons minced chives

In a small skillet sauté the onion and jalapeno in 1 tablespoon oil until tender. Set aside to cool. In a large bowl, combine flour, cornmeal, sugar, baking powder and salt. In another bowl, whisk the eggs, milk and remaining 3 tablespoons oil. Stir in the corn, cheese, salsa, chives and sautéed onion and peppers. Stir into the dry ingredients just until combined. Transfer to a greased 9 inch square baking pan. Bake at 425 degrees for 20-25 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean and top is lightly browned. Serve warm.