

Seasonal Eating
Whitney Danhof, Extension Agent

Corn Ideal for Summer Salads
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Mid-summer is time for cookouts, celebrations and picnics. These events call for cool sides from the garden, so I'm always on the lookout for different vegetable salads. Corn is fresh and abundant in July and pairs so well with all of the grilled meats, fried chicken and even burgers and hotdogs.

With its sweet flavor, corn is ideal for summer vegetable side salads. You can use the corn raw in a salad for a crisp and juicy flavor and texture. Or, you can briefly cook the corn to remove some of the starchiness and enhance the flavor and texture. Boiling or microwaving the corn for just a few minutes and plunging it into cold water will help keep it fresh and colorful but with a slightly softer texture. Broiling, grilling or roasting brings a slightly chewy texture and caramelized flavor from the browning. The method you use depends on the flavor and texture you want in the recipe. For Mexican flavored salads, the corn is often grilled for a deeper, caramelized flavor. Light Mediterranean style salads often use boiled corn. It's up to you!



Ingredients that pair well with corn for a Mexican inspired salad include red onion, jalapenos and cilantro with a lime, cumin and chili powder dressing. For a more Mediterranean twist on a corn salad combine it with cherry tomatoes, green onions, basil and an Italian vinaigrette dressing. The recipe below is more of an American twist on a classic of pasta salad with elbow macaroni, celery, green pepper, green onions and an herby, creamy dressing.

Dressings for corn salads can either be of the vinaigrette style or a more creamy mayonnaise based dressing. If you are taking your salad with you to a potluck or a picnic, opt for the vinaigrette dressings and leave the salad out for serving for no more than 2 hours (or 1 hour if it's 90 degrees or more and you're outside). If you are at home with access to a refrigerator, a creamy dressing like ranch or a mayonnaise base will work well and be delicious.

No matter what you do with corn, it adds a summery, sweet flavor to all of your potlucks and cookouts. So take advantage of the season and have a corn salad this week. For more information and recipes check out the Seasonal Eating page at bedford.tennessee.edu.

Pasta and Corn Salad with Creamy Herb Dressing

- 1 cup elbow macaroni
- 4 ears fresh shucked corn
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup sour cream
- 2 tablespoons buttermilk

1/4 cup chopped fresh Italian parsley
2 tablespoons chopped fresh chives
1 teaspoon chopped fresh dill weed
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
2 ribs celery, finely chopped
1/4 cup finely chopped green bell pepper
2 green onions, chopped

In a large saucepan, bring about 4-5 cups water to a boil with a couple of pinches of kosher salt. Add the elbow macaroni and boil until al dente, about 8 -10 minutes. Drain and rinse with cold water, letting the water drain off well. Meanwhile, place the shucked ears of corn on the grill or on a sheet pan under the broiler and cook for about 10 minutes, turning once in a while until just barely starting to brown in spots. Remove and let cool. When cool enough to handle, cut the kernels from the corn. In a large bowl, stir together the mayonnaise, sour cream, buttermilk, parsley, chives, dill weed, salt and pepper. Add the pasta, corn kernels, celery, bell pepper and green onions. Stir well to mix. Cover and let sit in the refrigerator to chill, about an hour or more. Stir before serving.