

# Sweet Corn

## History

The cultivation of corn can be traced back 8,000 years to Central America. Sweet corn cobs have been discovered in Mexican caves from thousands of years ago. Mesoamericans chose to grow teosinite plants, an annual grass with small amounts of edible product. They grew and cultivated the teosinite plant until they had one that produced a substantial amount of edible product-corn, as we know it today. Corn is one of the “sisters” in a traditional American Indian “Three Sisters” garden, made up of beans, corn, and squash.

European settlers in America first collected tribally grown sweet corn in the 1770s.

Since corn originates from a grass plant, it can sometimes be considered a grain more so than a vegetable. This explains why sweet corn has more calories and carbohydrates than many other vegetables. Regardless, corn has health benefits, such as vitamins B and C.

There is a big difference between seed corn and sweet corn. Seed corn is grown to be used as ethanol, oil, or feed for livestock. It is tough for humans to eat, which is why we do not eat seed corn. This is the majority of the corn that you see in fields along the road. Sweet corn is what humans eat. It is a mutant type of field corn that collects more sugar and less starch in the kernels. The sweeter the corn, the less cooking time required. Sweet corn is grown in half of the states in the United States.



## Fun Facts

- Cornmeal is ground corn that contains the hull and germ.
- Cornmeal can be used in bread, muffins, tortillas, and other grain products.
- Popcorn is a special corn that has extra water in the casing of the wall- when it is heated the water turns to steam and the kernel explodes.
- Field corn is also called “grain corn.”
- Wisconsin farmers produced 573 million bushels of corn in 2016.
- Only 3 percent of the corn grown in Wisconsin goes towards food product.



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