



## Using, Storing and Preserving

# Sweet Corn



Prepared by:

Lisa Treiber, MSU Extension educator

*Michigan-grown sweet corn is available during August and September.*

## Recommended varieties

Of the more than 60 varieties that fall into the sweet corn category, names one might recognize would include Peaches and Cream, Jubilee, Silver Queen, Butter and Sugar, Kandy Korn, Tuxedo, Cotton Candy and Illini Gold.

## Storage and food safety

- Preserve corn within 2 to 6 hours of harvest for best quality.
- Purchase a product that is not buggy or damaged.
- Do not wash corn in the husk before storing. Store the corn in its husk in the refrigerator.
- Use a separate cutting board for vegetables and keep corn away from raw meat and meat juices to avoid cross-contamination.
- Wash hands before and after handling fresh produce.
- After removing husk and silk, wash corn under cool running water before preparing it. Do not use soap.
- For best quality and nutritive value, preserve no more than your family can consume in 12 months.

## Yield

1 pound	=	five medium ears of corn or 5 to 6 half-cup servings of corn kernels
4 to 5 pounds of corn	=	2 pints frozen or canned corn kernels
20 pounds (in husks)	=	a canner load of 9 pints
31½ pounds (in husks)	=	a canner load of 7 quarts
1 bushel (in husks)	=	35 pounds



## How to preserve

### Freezing whole corn kernels

Select ears with plump, tender kernels and thin, sweet milk. Remove husks and silk. Wash corn under cool running water. Blanch ears in boiling water for 4 minutes. Cool promptly in ice water and drain. Cut kernels from cob at about two-thirds the depth of the kernels. (For cream-style corn, cut the kernels at about the center of the kernel and then scrape the cobs with the back of the knife to remove the juice and hearts of the kernels.) *Tip:* use a bundt cake pan to keep the corn cob steady in the center and to catch the scraped kernels. Pack corn into freezer containers, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal, label, date and freeze the container. Use frozen corn within 8 to 12 months for best quality.

### Freezing corn on the cob

Increase blanching time to 7 minutes for small ears, 9 minutes for medium ears and 11 minutes for large ears. Immerse in ice water for the same amount of time that corn was blanched, then blot dry with paper toweling. Tightly wrap ears individually in moisture vapor-proof film and pack in plastic freezer bags. Seal, label, date and freeze the cobs. Do not freeze more than 1 quart (2 to 3 pounds) of food per cubic foot of freezer capacity per day. One cubic foot will hold 30 quarts of food.

### Canning corn

**PRESSURE CANNING IS THE ONLY SAFE METHOD FOR CANNING CORN BECAUSE OF ITS LOW ACID CONTENT.**

*Lawn or garden questions?*

Visit [migarden.msu.edu](http://migarden.msu.edu).  
Call toll-free 1-888-678-3464.

## Using, Storing and Preserving Sweet Corn

### Canning whole-kernel corn

Select ears containing slightly immature kernels, or corn of ideal quality for eating fresh. Canning some sweeter varieties or kernels that are too immature may result in browning. White sweet corn varieties can appear a little grayish after canning and have less nutrition than yellow or bicolor varieties. Can a small amount and check color and flavor before canning large quantities. Remove husks and silk. Wash corn under cool running water. Blanch 3 minutes in boiling water. Cut corn from cob at about two-thirds the depth of the kernels. An electric knife works well for this project.

**Caution: Do not scrape cob.** Scraping removes the starchy liquid from the kernels and increases the time required to safely process the corn.

**Hot pack:** Add 1 cup boiling water to each 4 cups of corn and bring to a boil. Simmer 5 minutes. Pack hot corn into hot jars, leaving 1 inch headspace. Add ½ teaspoon salt to pints, 1 teaspoon to quarts, if desired. Fill jar to 1 inch from top with boiling hot cooking liquid. Remove air bubbles. Wipe jar rims. Adjust lids and process in a dial-gauge pressure canner OR in a weighted-gauge pressure canner (see chart for process time).

**Raw pack:** Pack corn into hot jars, leaving 1 inch headspace. Add ½ teaspoon salt to pints, 1 teaspoon to quarts, if desired. Fill jars to 1 inch from top with boiling water. Remove air bubbles. Wipe jar rims. Adjust lids and process in a dial-gauge pressure canner OR in a weighted-gauge pressure canner (see chart for process time). Let jars stand undisturbed on the

counter for 24 hours, remove rings, check to make sure lids are sealed, wash jars, label, date and store.

### Canning cream-style corn

Remove corn husks and silk; wash ears. Blanch ears 4 minutes in boiling water. Cut corn from cob at center of kernel. Scrape remaining corn from cobs with a table knife. CAUTION: Quart jars are not recommended because of the denseness of the canned product.

**Hot pack:** Add 1 cup boiling water to each 2 cups of corn, bring to a boil. Pack corn into hot pint jars, leaving 1 inch headspace; add ½ teaspoon salt, if desired. Remove air bubbles. Wipe jar rims. Adjust lids and process in a dial-gauge pressure canner OR in a weighted-gauge pressure canner (see chart for process time). Let jars stand undisturbed on the counter for 24 hours, remove rings, check to make sure lids are sealed, wash jars, label, date and store.

## References

Food Preservation Series – *Corn*. 2006. Michigan State University Extension.

Andress, Elizabeth and Judy A. Harrison. *So Easy to Preserve*. Bulletin 989, 6th Edition. Cooperative Extension University of Georgia, 2014.

*Let's Preserve Sweet Corn*. 2008. Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences.

*Complete Guide to Home Canning*, Agriculture Information Bulletin No. 539, USDA, revised 2009.

Recommended process time for **whole-kernel corn** in a dial-gauge pressure canner.

			Canner pressure (PSI) at altitudes of			
Style of pack	Jar size	Process time	0 - 2,000 ft	2,001 - 4,000 ft	4,001 - 6,000 ft	6,001 - 8,000 ft
Hot and raw	Pints	55 min	11	12	13	14
	Quarts	85	11	12	13	14

Recommended process time for **whole-kernel corn** in a weighted-gauge pressure canner.

			Canner pressure (PSI) at altitudes of	
Style of pack	Jar size	Process time	0-1,000 ft	Above 1,000 ft
Hot and raw	Pints	55 min	10	15
	Quarts	85	10	15

## Using, Storing and Preserving Sweet Corn

Recommended process time for **cream-style corn** in a dial-gauge pressure canner.

Style of pack	Jar size	Process time	Canner pressure (PSI) at altitudes of			
			0 - 2,000 ft	2,001 - 4,000 ft	4,001 - 6,000 ft	6,001 - 8,000 ft
Hot	Pints	85 min	11	12	13	14

Recommended process time for **cream-style corn** in a weighted-gauge pressure canner.

Style of pack	Jar size	Process time	Canner pressure (PSI) at altitudes of	
			0-1,000 ft	Above 1,000 ft
Hot	Pints	85 min	10	15

### Pickled Corn Relish

10 cups fresh whole-kernel corn (16 to 20 medium-sized ears) or six 10-oz packages of frozen corn	1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups sugar
2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups diced sweet red peppers	5 cups vinegar (5 percent)
2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups diced sweet green peppers	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp canning or pickling salt
2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups chopped celery	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp celery seed
1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups diced onions	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp dry mustard
	1 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp turmeric

**NOTE: ADDING THE AMOUNT OF VINEGAR INDICATED IN THIS RECIPE IS CRITICAL FOR THE RECIPE TO BE SAFE WHEN CANNING USING A BOILING WATER BATH CANNER.**

**Fresh corn:** Remove husks and silk. Cook ears of corn in boiling water about 5 minutes; remove and plunge into cold water. Drain; cut from the cob. Do not scrape the cob.

**Frozen corn:** Defrost in the refrigerator overnight or in a microwave oven.

*This recipe is designed for half-pint or pint jars only.*

*To make relish:*

Combine peppers, celery, onions, sugar, vinegar, salt and celery seed. Cover pan and heat until mixture starts to boil, then boil uncovered for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Mix mustard and turmeric in  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of the simmered mixture. Add this mixture and corn to the hot mixture. Simmer another 5 minutes. If desired, thicken mixture with flour paste ( $\frac{1}{4}$  cup flour blended in  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup water) and stir frequently to prevent sticking and scorching. Fill jars with hot mixture, leaving  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch headspace. Remove air bubbles. Wipe jar rims. Adjust lids and process 15 minutes in a boiling water bath. Let jars stand undisturbed for 24 hours, remove rings, check to make sure lids are sealed, wash jars, label, date and store.

## MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

MSU is an affirmative-action, equal-opportunity employer, committed to achieving excellence through a diverse workforce and inclusive culture that encourages all people to reach their full potential. Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status. Issued in furtherance of MSU Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Ray Hammerschmidt, Interim Director, MSU Extension, East Lansing, MI 48824. This information is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names does not imply endorsement by MSU Extension or bias against those not mentioned.

Find out more about Michigan Fresh at  
[msue.anr.msu.edu/program/info/mi\\_fresh](https://msue.anr.msu.edu/program/info/mi_fresh).