

# Supersweet taste sensation on the cob

Bert Andrews is charging \$3 for a baker's dozen of sweet corn this season, but he feels the "Phenomenal Supersweet" variety he grew for the first time this year is worth it.

Low yields, caused by this summer's drought, coupled with consumers' love of fresh corn-on-the-cob has driven prices up this season. First plantings produced plants with fewer ears that usual and many of the ears that did grow have poorly developed kernels, according to Halton's agricultural representative Phyllis MacMaster.

She says purchasing a dozen cobs for \$2.50 is a real bargain in southwestern Ontario. To the east, near Ottawa, crops received plenty of rain and prices are as low as \$1 a dozen.

Growers like Mr. Andrews, owner of Andrews Scenic Acres on No. 10 Sideroad, whose second planting was able to benefit from late July rains have good quality corn. He has already sold 14 acres worth of corn and has six left to go.

Mr. Andrews expects to be picking corn until the end of September. Usually the season ends mid-month but this year he planted slow maturing varieties and they produce the best quality corn.

**CORN EATING ETIQUETTE: "Meals at which corn-on-the-cob is served are by their nature informal, take care not to eat with so much abandon that bits of buttery kernels stick to the side of your mouth."**

Charlotte Ford's Book of Modern Manners

Orders of 50 dozen cobs aren't unusual at his farm gate operation. The Ontario Agricultural Museum ordered that many for this Sunday's Harvest Fair. Mr. Andrews supplied 300 dozen to the museum for its recent corn festival.

Corn is taking the place of strawberries and raspberries at Andrew's, an operation that offers pick-your-own and ready picked berries earlier in the season.

According to Ms MacMaster, sweet corn is an expensive crop to produce. Most of the expense comes from spraying the crop two or three times each season. That hasn't kept Halton farmers from producing the sweet stuff however. The 1986 census showed 35 farms in Halton had a total of 277 acres in sweet corn.

Those who do grow sweet corn reap the benefits of a largely urban market. Milton's urbanites aren't likely to grow their own sweet corn and willingly pay the price for farm-fresh corn-on-the-cob.

Ontario is Canada's largest corn producing province and last year more than 13 million dozen cobs of fresh market corn were harvested.

Corn originated with the ancient Aztecs back in 3,500 BC. The Indians called the two-to three-inch-long cobs maize which was a cross between two varieties of wild grass. Today corn cobs are as long as 15 inches.

At Crawford Lake Conservation Area, where an Indian village has been recreated, corn will be one of the features Sunday during the Indian Summer Festival. The event runs from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Visitors to the Guelph Line property will be treated to corn-on-the-cob cooked with the husks on.

The Jim Sky native dancers and the Burlington Teen Tour Band will entertain as well

as native artists and artisans. Corn-on-the-cob is also on the menu at the Ontario Agricultural Museum Sunday and corn husk doll making will be demonstrated. Take advantage of one of Ontarians' favourite tastes while the season lasts.



Photos by JOHN WARREN  
Bert Andrews is thankful for the rain in late July and a bountiful second planting of sweet corn. He says it's the best tasting corn he's ever produced and is worth the \$3 a baker's dozen he is charging.

## How to enjoy corn at its best

Roadside stands stacked with fragrant corn-on-the-cob are a common sight this time of year.

Those who don't grow this sweet-tasting grain in their own gardens, count on area growers to provide fresh picked cobs at the farm gate. The season runs from mid-July to mid-September.

Foodland Ontario has several tips on selecting the cream of the crop:

- Bright green husks and moist golden silk mean fresh corn. Usually, the dryer the silk, the older the corn.
- No need to pull down the husk to check for quality. Simply hold the cob at the silk end and if it's ready you'll be able to feel the kernels through the husk. Firm, round kernels indicate sweetness.
- Picking your own corn will ensure its freshness. Call toll free 1-800-268-3735 to find out where to pick corn in this area.

It is important to eat corn as soon as possible after cooking. The longer it sits, the more sweet flavour is lost. If you can't eat it right away, store unhusked cobs in the refrigerator in a plastic bag.

There are several ways to prepare corn-on-the-cob and they include using a microwave oven. Don't over-cook or flavour will be lost.

**BOILING:** Most corn-on-the-cob is prepared by boiling it in enough water to cover cobs. Add corn to boiling water, return water to boil and cook, covered, 5-7 minutes until kernels are tender.

**STEAMING:** This method also requires a cooking time of 5-7 minutes. Corn is placed on a rack over 2 inches of boiling water and is covered and steamed.

**MICROWAVING:** Place four cobs of corn in microwave-safe dish wrapped with plastic wrap and cook at High for five minutes. Corn may also be individually wrapped in plastic. Also try leaving husks on but cut off both ends of the ear of corn.

**BARBECUE:** Here are three ways to enjoy grilled corn-on-the-cob. 1) Wrap husked corn in foil and cook on the grill five to six inches above the coals for 20 minutes. Turn every five minutes until corn is tender. 2) Pull back husks and remove silk from corn. Replace husks and tie ends. Soak corn in cold water for 10-15 minutes. Barbecue as above. 3) Remove husks and silk from corn. Cook directly on the rack above the grill for 15 minutes, turning frequently.

Remember it's the butter we add to corn-on-the-cob that gives this dish a big calorie kick. On its own, one ear equals just 83 calories. In addition to being easy on calorie counters, corn packs the extra punch of high dietary fibre!



Becky Lopers peels back the husk to expose the supersweet corn kernels beneath.

## Recipe File



Photo courtesy of FOODLAND ONTARIO  
Combine bite-size pieces of fresh corn-on-the-cob with other seasonal vegetables for a delicious salad.

## Corn Salad with Basil Vinaigrette

Here's a delicious corn salad that combines a melange of summer's fresh vegetables — broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, tomatoes and green onions. For added flavor, marinate the vegetables in a simple vinaigrette.

4 cobs Ontario Corn, cooked	4
1 cup broccoli florets	250 mL
1 cup cauliflower florets	250 mL
2 carrots, sliced	2
2 tomatoes, diced	2
4 green onions, chopped	4
1/4 cup red wine vinegar	50 mL
1 tsp. Dijon mustard	5 mL
1 tsp. honey	5 mL
1 clove garlic, chopped	1
1/2 tsp. salt	2 mL
1/2 tsp. pepper	0.5 mL
1/2 cup vegetable oil	75 mL
2 tbsp. chopped fresh basil (or 1 tsp/5 mL dried basil)	25 mL

Using serrated knife, cut each cob of corn into 1-inch (2.5 cm) chunks. In large bowl, combine corn, broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, tomatoes and green onions. In small bowl, combine vinegar, mustard, honey, garlic, salt and pepper. Slowly whisk in oil. Pour dressing over vegetables and toss. Sprinkle with basil. Cover and marinate 2 hours at room temperature before serving. Makes 8 servings.

Preparation Time: 20 minutes  
Cooking Time: 5 minutes



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