



Corny Veggie Mac 'n Cheese Cups

By Erin Fletter

Prep Time 40 / **Cook Time** 25 / **Serves** 4 - 6

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

brine: to soak in salted water.

knife skills: Bear Claw (growl), Pinch, Plank, and Bridge (look out for trolls).

mince: to chop into teeny tiny pieces.

mix: to thoroughly combine two or more ingredients until uniform in texture.

Equipment

Ingredients

Corny Veggie Mac 'n Cheese Cups

- 1 C uncooked macaroni or other small, shaped noodles ******(for GLUTEN ALLERGY sub gluten-free/nut-free noodles)******
- 2 tsp salt
- 3/4 C mixed raw veggies (broccoli, cauliflower, carrot, tomato, small sweet potato, parsnip, etc.)
- 2 eggs (sub 2 to 3 extra T of heavy cream)
- 2 T butter
- 1/4 tsp ground nutmeg
- 1/4 tsp garlic or onion powder (or 1 fresh garlic clove, minced)
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp ground pepper
- 1/4 C heavy cream

- 1 1/2 C grated cheddar cheese (or Gouda or Colby-Jack)
- 3/4 C frozen corn
- Veggie streusel crust:
- 1/2 C reserved minced veggies (from veggies for Mac 'n Cheese Cups)
- 1/4 C Italian or panko breadcrumbs **** (for GLUTEN ALLERGY sub gluten-free breadcrumbs)****
- 1/4 C all-purpose flour **** (for GLUTEN ALLERGY sub gluten-free flour)****
- 2 T butter **** (for DAIRY ALLERGY sub olive oil)****
- 1 pinch salt

Food Allergen Substitutions

Corny Veggie Mac 'n Cheese Cups

Gluten/Wheat: Substitute gluten-free noodles for macaroni. Substitute gluten-free flour for all-purpose flour and gluten-free breadcrumbs for panko breadcrumbs in Streusel Crust.

Dairy: Follow Vegan Corny Veggie Mac 'n Cheese Cups recipe.

Instructions

Corny Veggie Mac 'n Cheese Cups

preheat + brine + mince

Preheat the oven to 350 F. In a medium-sized pot or large mixing bowl, soak **1 cup of uncooked macaroni** in **3 cups of warm water + 2 teaspoons salt** for 10 to 20 minutes. Chop your choice of **veggies** to total about ****1 1/2 cups** (reserve 1/2 cup for the Crispy Veggie Streusel Crust (recipe below)). Chop all veggies into tiny pieces! If using parsnip or sweet potato, grate them.

whisk + grate + mix

Crack and whisk **2 eggs** in a mixing bowl. Using a box grater, grate **2 tablespoons of butter**. Add butter to the eggs, then measure and mix in **1/4 teaspoon nutmeg, 1/4 teaspoon garlic, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 1/4 teaspoon black pepper, 1/4 cup heavy cream, 1 1/2 cups grated cheddar cheese**. Drain noodles in a colander and add to egg mixture along with $\frac{3}{4}$ cup frozen corn and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of the minced veggies, then mix again.

grease + scoop

Grease a muffin pan and then use an ice cream scoop to divide the Mac 'n Cheese into the wells of the pan.

streusel: mix + sprinkle

In a mixing bowl, add **1/2 cup reserved minced veggies, 1/4 cup Italian breadcrumbs, 1/4 cup flour, 2 tablespoons butter**, and **1 pinch of salt**. Mix with hands until a crumbly texture forms. Sprinkle evenly over Mac 'n Cheese Cups just before baking for about 20 to 25 minutes, or until the cheese has melted and the tops are golden brown. Enjoy!

Featured Ingredient: Corn!

Hi, my name is Maizy, and I'm an ear of corn!

"I'm pretty close to my dad—his name's Pop Corn. (I know, my humor can be kind of corny ... but, that's me!) I'm great to eat on the cob, either boiled or grilled, especially at summer picnics. If you buy me in a store, make sure my husk is still on and pull it back just a bit. My kernels should look fresh, plump, and juicy! (A kernel might just squirt liquid when poked or eaten!) So, how do you eat corn on the cob? Across, down, or both?"

History

Corn was first cultivated by indigenous people in southern Mexico anywhere from 7 to 10,000 years ago. Corn is unique: most vegetables and fruits we eat today are domesticated versions of wild plants humans discovered long ago. Corn is a human invention and did not exist in the wild first, although it did start from a wild grass called "teosinte." Teosinte didn't look like modern corn on the cob looks today. The kernels were much smaller and further apart.

Corn was known as "maize" by Native Americans in South and North America, and they eventually depended upon this crop for food. Over time, maize was selected to have more kernels, bigger cobs, and more kernel rows.

Many Native American tribes tell the story of the origin of corn. Tribes preserved their tales and retold them over many generations. They passed down stories through oral tradition, writing down only some of the stories. According to Native American lore, corn came to Earth by various routes.

When Spanish explorers arrived in the Americas, they had never seen corn before, among many other things the indigenous people showed them.

Corn is produced on every continent in the world except Antarctica! As a result, corn and cornmeal are staple foods of many regions.

Native Americans used to braid corn husks to make masks, moccasins, sleeping mats, baskets, and dolls. Today, corn is in many products we use daily. Cornstarch is used to thicken sauces, to strengthen the fabric used to make clothing, and to bind books. Soft drinks are sweetened with corn syrup, chickens and cows are fed corn, and the ink in pens is made from corn oil. Corn is used to make glue, shoe polish, marshmallows, ice cream, and makeup. Corn is also used to produce ethanol—a liquid biofuel used to power cars.

Corn comes in many colors, including black, blue-gray, purple, green, red, white, and yellow.

The six main types of corn are: "Sweet" corn is the kind we eat. "Dent" corn is fed to cows and chickens.

Another variety is "Popcorn," a popular snack food. Its hard kernels inflate and burst open when heated. "Flint" or "Indian" corn is multicolored and often used for Thanksgiving decoration, although it's also used to make popcorn and blue and red corn chips and tortillas. "Pod" corn (or wild maize) is a mutated type of corn that grows glumes (leaf structures) around each kernel and is used for ornamental purposes. Finally, "Flour" corn is mainly used to make corn flour (that makes sense!).

The early settlers to North America considered corn so valuable they used it as currency to trade for other products such as meat and furs.

Anatomy & Etymology

Corn is a tall plant grass that has large ears with many seeds or kernels.

Most corn plants have a single stalk. The stalk grows vertically up from the ground, and the variety of corn and the plant's environment will determine how tall it grows.

Corn plants have both male and female parts—the name for this type of plant is "monoecious." The male part, the tassel, emerges at the top of the plant when all the leaves have formed. The tassel contains many branches that house many small male flowers. The female part of the corn plant is the silk that grows out of the ear. The immature ear consists of a cob, eggs that develop into kernels after pollination, and silks. One corn plant will produce more than one ear of corn, with the ear at the top of the plant usually growing the largest.

According to the USDA, corn can be used as a grain or a vegetable, depending on when it is harvested. If corn is fully mature and becomes dry, it is considered a grain. It can then be ground into cornmeal or corn masa, which you'll find in corn tortillas, cornbread, etc. Popcorn kernels are also whole grains that are harvested when mature. Corn on the cob and the corn kernels found in frozen or canned corn are picked when the kernels are soft and full of water. In these forms, corn is considered a starchy vegetable.

One ear of corn has, on average, as many as 800 kernels in 16 rows! Corn will always have an even number of rows on each cob. Each kernel can potentially become a new plant!

The word for "corn" that is used by most of the world is "maize," which comes from the Spanish word "maiz."

How to Pick, Buy, & Eat

Fresh corn on the cob is seasonal during July and August. Choose ears of corn with yellow or white niblets and inspect each ear of corn before buying. Avoid any corn that has dark or dried spots. Store fresh corn in the fridge until ready to use.

Frozen corn is a great alternative when fresh corn isn't in season. You don't have to thaw frozen corn before adding it to baked recipes, soups, pasta, chili, or risotto! However, if adding frozen corn to sautéed recipes, run a colander of frozen corn under warm water to thaw it out a bit first.

Sauté frozen corn rather than boiling it—boiling will destroy all the flavor! Butter, salt, and pepper are all you need. When sautéing corn, add the salt right at the end. Since salt draws out moisture, salting too

soon will dry out your corn.

Frozen corn tastes fresher than canned corn. Many grocery stores even sell frozen cobs of corn. Frozen corn will keep for months.

Nutrition

Phosphorous is a mineral the body uses to build strong bones. Phosphorus also helps the body to produce energy. Starches in corn also provide you with long-lasting energy.

Fiber helps to keep our inner pipelines clean and clear. Drinking plenty of water helps move fiber through our intestines to clean them out! Vegetables, fruit, and grains have the most fiber of any food. Fiber is also important for our hearts! Leaving on the edible peels of vegetables and fruits also helps us to eat more fiber.

Potassium helps balance water in the body when eating salty foods by maintaining normal fluid levels inside our cells. Salt or sodium regulates the fluid outside of our cells. It is also necessary for proper muscle contraction, nerve transmission, and better blood pressure.