



Creamed Corn

by Sheri Castle

Corn is a must-have side in certain parts of the South, and not just in cornbread and hushpuppies. In a swath across Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, and parts of Louisiana—areas that, not coincidentally, excel in meat-and-threes and steam-table plate lunches—we find a lot of corn pudding and creamed corn. While it's true that straight-up corn on the cob is so much fun to eat that it qualifies as entertainment, it's food of the moment. Creamed corn made from those freshly shucked ears makes more sense as a barbecue side. Once cooked, all it needs is for someone to look in on it once in a while, to keep it stirred up. For the best creamed corn, track down local sweet corn in season. Choose ears so fresh that if you nick the raw kernels, you'll see beads of milky corn liquid, full of natural starch that helps thicken the dish without having to add so much flour that it turns pasty.

Makes 8 servings

8 ears of corn, freshly shucked with silks wiped away
3 tablespoons salted butter, plus more to taste
3 tablespoons instant flour (such as Wondra) or all-purpose flour
1/2 cup heavy cream
2 tablespoons granulated sugar
1 teaspoon kosher salt, plus more to taste
1/2 to 3/4 cup whole milk, as needed
Ground black pepper, to taste

Working in a large bowl, cut the kernels off the cobs. Don't go all the way down to the cob on the first pass; make shallow cuts that remove the tops of the kernels, and then use the back of the knife or a spoon to scrape off the remaining corn and the milky liquid. You should have about 6 heaping cups of corn. Pulse 1 1/2 cups of the kernels in a food processor until very finely chopped and add them back to the bowl. (If you don't have a food processor, hold back 2 ears of corn to grate on the small holes of a box grater.)

Warm the butter in a large skillet over medium heat. When it begins to sizzle, whisk in the flour and cook for 2 minutes, whisking continuously. Do not let the flour brown.

Add the cream and whisk until smooth.

Stir in the corn, sugar, salt, and 1/2 cup of the milk. Cook only until the corn loses its raw taste and the mixture begins to bubble and thicken, 5 to 8 minutes, stirring slowly and continuously. Add more milk, if needed. The fresher and juicier the corn, the less milk you'll need.

Season the corn with pepper and taste for salt. Serve warm, topped with another pat of butter, if you like.