

What is Baby Corn?

Baby corn is produced from regular corn plants which are harvested early while the ears are very immature, resulting in small ears or “baby corn.” Depending on variety, kernels can be yellow, white, blue or even pink.

Canned baby corn sold in the U.S. is imported from Asia—none of it organically grown. Fresh, locally produced baby corn has better flavor and texture than canned baby corn and may have been grown organically.

Selecting Baby Corn

Look for fresh baby corn at your local farmers’ market from mid-August to mid-September. Buy baby corn in the husk to maintain crispness and flavor.

Storage

Refrigerate immediately to retain sweetness. Unhusked baby corn can be refrigerated for up to one week without losing its quality.

To freeze baby corn, Place husked, ears in boiling water or steam for 30-45 seconds. Cool then freeze.

Ways to Use Baby Corn

Baby corn adds a special, gourmet touch to many dishes and salads. Its miniature size is appealing, as is the taste, color and crunch.

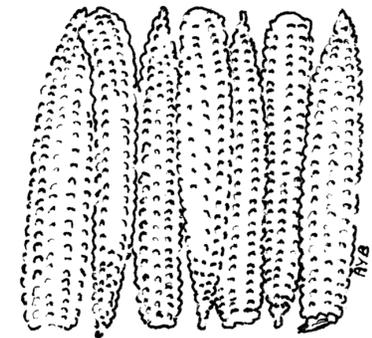
When ready to prepare, remove the husk and wash baby corn before cooking. Most people like to steam baby corn for 5 minutes or until tender before using in other dishes. Baby corn can also be eaten raw; the entire tiny ear of corn is edible, cob and all. Here are some easy ways to start using baby corn.

- Serve raw with other vegetables and a low-fat dip.
- Toss cooked baby corn into your favorite pasta salad or tossed salad.
- Include baby corn in any stir-fry dish.
- Add baby corn to spaghetti sauce, a rice and bean dish, or casserole.
- Serve steamed baby corn as a side dish topped with a bit of olive oil or butter and a dash of salt.
- Include raw baby corn in vegetable soups or stews, adding near the end of cooking time.
- Marinate baby corn to serve as a vegetable side dish or add to pasta or tossed salads.

How Nutritious Is Baby Corn?

Baby corn is high in folate, a B-vitamin; four ounces provides 31% of the RDA. It is a good source of several other nutrients too: the same serving size also provides 13 percent of the potassium, 14 percent of the B-6, 10 percent of the riboflavin, 17 percent of the vitamin C and 11 percent of the fiber adults need each day.¹

Yellow corn contains carotenoids,² which are substances that may help prevent coronary artery disease, certain cancers, and cataracts. In particular, yellow corn is abundant in two carotenoids, zeaxanthin and lutein, which keep eyes healthy. The more yellow the corn is, the more carotenoids it contains, since these compounds provide plants with color. Baby corn, being pale, would carry lesser amounts of these carotenoids than mature corn.



¹ Data calculated from the Japanese Standard Tables of Food Composition, 4th edition.

² USDA-NCC Carotenoid Database, 1998.

Enjoying Baby Corn

Try this simple, flavorful recipe to introduce your family to baby corn.

Marinated Baby Corn

2 pounds baby corn, husked and washed

Marinade

½ cup olive oil

½ cup cider or wine vinegar

½ cup water

¼ cup lemon juice

½ teaspoon salt

2 cloves pressed or minced garlic

Freshly-ground black pepper

A pinch of 3 or 4 herbs: basil, marjoram, thyme, dill, parsley, oregano, chives

Steam baby corn for 5 minutes or until tender. Drain and set aside. In a small bowl, combine all marinade ingredients and mix well. Place corn in large glass jar or plastic container and cover with marinade, stirring to coat ears well. Let set for several hours in refrigerator. Serve chilled or at room temperature. Marinated baby corn will keep in the refrigerator for several weeks.

Recipe Cards

Additional baby corn recipes, some developed by local chefs, are available. Contact the WSU Research and Extension offices listed on the back panel.

Food from the Field

Local farmers are providing new foods for your table. Baby corn has caught the attention of Puget Sound farmers because of its superior taste and texture. Fresh baby corn is crispier and more nutritious than the canned variety.

Buying local produce not only gives you fresh, nutritious food, but also enhances your community in these ways:

- Keeps small farmers in business and supports the local economy.
- Preserves farmland and open space in your area.
- Conserves natural resources—less fuel used in transportation and packaging.
- Preserves the environment with responsible use of water, fewer farm chemicals, and less air pollution.

If these things are important to you, visit a farmers' market weekly during the growing season and look for the Puget Sound Fresh label at your grocery store. Make a difference with your food dollars!

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Baby Corn

A flavorful, appealing addition to salads, pasta, soups and other favorite dishes.

Food from the Field Series