## **FOOD**

# ALL HAIL IOWA'S SWEET CORN!

BY MARY ANN MENENDEZ STAFF WRITER

It is time for everyone to pay homage to Iowa's sweet corn as Estherville gears up for the annual Sweet Corn Days celebration this weekend. I am still in awe at the sweetness and tenderness of sweet corn grown in this state. There is no other place that I have been that corn on the cob is such a delicious

This week marks 17 years, (July 31st is the exact date), since my family moved to Estherville so husband Ron could manage this newspaper. I remember with fondness how our children, then ages 5 and 3, experienced a first-ever visit to a corn field for the purpose of picking some ears for that night's supper. Talk about excitement! Prior to this occasion, corn could only be bought in the grocery stores in whatever city we lived in back East. This mom memory will always be a sweet one for me; as sweet as the corn

And before we get to today's featured sweet corn recipes, it goes without saying, that our family has been so blessed that fate brought us to Emmet County, where we live with Iowans who are kind, generous and caring. Thank you for sharing Northwest Iowa with us.

Enjoy these recipes and celebrate the goodness of Iowa sweet corn!

#### Sweet Corn Au Gratin

- 6 ears of fresh corn or 1 (12oz.) can corn kernels, drained 3 tablespoons butter
- 1 small onion, finely chopped 1 green bell pepper, cored,
- seeded, and finely chopped tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2 cups milk
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 2 eggs, well beaten 1 teaspoon sugar

Salt and pepper to taste 1/2 cup bread crumbs

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 2-quart casserole dish. If fresh corn is used, remove husk and silk, and cut kernels from cob. In a large frying pan over medium heat, melt butter. Add onion and bell pepper and saute until tender; ate until ready to be served. stir in flour and then add milk. Cook, stirring constantly, until mixture has thickened and is smooth. Remove from heat; add corn, cheddar cheese, eggs, sugar, salt, and pepper. Pour into prepared casserole dish and top with bread crumbs. Set into a shallow pan of hot water and bake 45 minutes. Remove from oven and serve immediately.

#### Corn-Avocado Salsa 2 small to medium ripe avoca-

- dos, peeled, seeded and finely diced
- 1 cup fresh or frozen corn ker-
- 2 medium tomatoes, seeded and finely diced
- 3 tablespoons lime juice
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped sprigs. fresh cilantro

1/2 to 1 teaspoon minced hot green chile peppers



It was Saturday, Aug. 1, 1992, when Estherville's newest little residents, Anthony, 5, and Laura, 3, enjoyed a "field trip" in the truest sense and picked sweet corn from Steve Casperson's land south of Estherville off Highway 4. The experience is now a treasured memory.

1/2 teaspoon salt

In a medium bowl, gently combine avocado, corn kernels, tomatoes, lime juice, cilantro, chile peppers, and salt. Cover and refriger-

#### Cool Corn Chowder 2 cups cooked corn kernels

- 1 bunch green onions, white and 2 inches of green, sliced Juice of one lime
- 2 teaspoons fresh dill leaves Salt and pepper to taste 4 cups buttermilk, divided Small fresh dill sprigs for gar-

In a food processor, puree the corn, green onions, lime juice, dill, salt and pepper until smooth. Add 1 cup of the buttermilk and process until blended. Transfer the mixture to a bowl and whisk in the remaining buttermilk. Chill for four hours.

Serve in frosted glasses or chilled cups, garnished with dill

Sweet Corn Salad 4 cooked ears of sweet corn,

husked and silk removed (pre- taste with salt. pared frozen sweet corn can be substituted)

10 to 12 radishes, thinly sliced 1/2 cup small-diced red onion 1/2 to chopped

coarsely 1/2 to 1 jalapeno chile pepper, seeded and coarsely chopped

- 3 tablespoons fresh-squeezed lime juice
- 3 teaspoons honey
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

1/2 teaspoonsea salt

Scrape the cooked corn kernels from the ears of corn by using a sharp kitchen knife and a large cutting board. Cut off the stem end to give a flat base. Hold the ear, tip end up, then cut downward, removing a few rows at a time. Place cut-off corn kernels in a large bowl. Add sliced radishes, diced onion, and cilantro leaves; set aside.

In a blender, puree the chile pepper, lime juice, honey, and olive oil. Add lime juice mixture to the bowl with the corn kernels. Season to

Refrigerate the salad until approximately 30 minutes before serving. Just before serving, toss in the fresh basil. Taste for seacilantro temperature.

#### Herbed Grilled

Corn

1/2 cup butter, softened 2 tablespoons chopped pars-

2 tablespoons chopped chives 1/2 teaspoon salt

Pepper, to taste

Blend butter with parsley, chives, salt and pepper. Spread 1 heaping tablespoon on each ear; wrap individually in heavy-duty foil. Grill over glowing coals 15-20 minutes or until tender, turning occasionally

#### Caramel Corn Ice Cream

2 cups corn kernels 1 cup Half-and-Half

2 cups and 3 tablespoons milk

2/3 cup sugar Dash of salt 3 large egg yolks 12 soft caramel candies

Combine corn and Half-and-Half three-fourths cup sonings and serve cold or at room in a food processor and process until smooth. Pour corn mixture into a sieve over a large bowl, reserving the liquid and discarding the solids. Add 2 cups milk, sugar, salt and egg yolks and stir with a whisk. Pour the mixture into a large saucepan and cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until thick. Do not allow to boil. Remove from heat and place in a large ice-filled bowl for 30 minutes stirring while occasionally. Combine 3 tablespoons milk and caramels in a small saucepan. Bring to a simmer and cook until the caramels melt while stirring frequently. Remove from heat and whisk until smooth. Allow the mixture to cool slightly. Pour the mixture into the freezer can of an ice cream mixer and freeze according to its instructions. Stir in the caramel mixture. Spoon the ice cream into a container and freeze

Fareway Fare

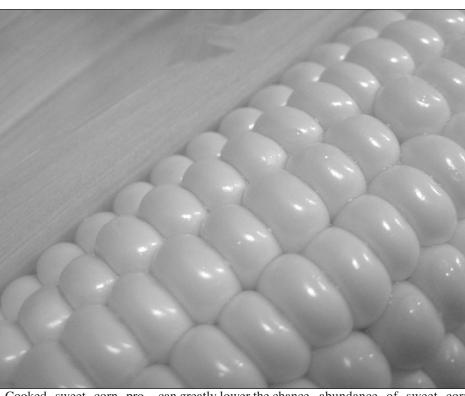
### Let's (h)ear it for Iowa's sweet corn!

STAFF WRITER

If you cannot get your fill of sweet corn at the Sweet Corn Days celebration in downtown Estherville, make sure to stop at your Fareway Store and stock up on Iowa favorite veggie.

Again, this year, the Estherville grocery store will be selling Jake's Sweet Corn from Thompson. The price for a dozen ears this week is \$4.99.

Sweet corn is a form of maize with a high sugar content. It is the product of a naturally-occurring recessive mutation in the genes. Unlike field corn, sweet corn is picked when immature (milk stage) and eaten as a vegetable, rather than a grain. Always remember, sweet corn stores poorly and must be eaten fresh, canned, become tough and starchy.



Cooked sweet corn pro- can greatly lower the chance abundance of sweet corn or frozen before the kernels vides an abundance of of heart disease and cancer. this week and eat to our antioxidant activity, which Let's celebrate Iowa's heart's content.

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