

Sweet corn for all seasons

ST CLOUD, Minn. (7/27/2015) — Freezing is a quick and convenient way to preserve sweet corn. If you have the freezer space, corn is an excellent vegetable to store frozen.

If you harvest corn, do it early in the morning before it gets hot. Husk ears and remove silk, then bring a large kettle of water to a boil and submerge several ears at a time. Blanch the ears in the boiling water for four minutes. Cool promptly in ice water, drain and cut the kernels from the cob.

An electric knife is a handy tool for cutting off the kernels. Package the corn in freezer containers, seal and freeze at 0°F or below for best quality.

Blanching, followed by chilling in ice water, are critical processes for producing quality frozen corn. The natural enzymes in corn need to be inactivated before freezing to prevent loss of color and nutrients, and flavor and texture changes. These enzymes are stopped by a hot blanch treatment. The chilling process prevents the corn from becoming mushy due to overcooking.

New varieties of sweet corn are sometimes referred to as “supersweet” corn. They contain more natural sugars than traditional varieties. The natural sugars also seem to improve the keeping quality of sweet corn. As a result, some people freeze the supersweet corn without blanching and still have an acceptable product. For longer storage (more than 4 months), it is still best to blanch the corn so it will not have an off-flavor.

Can you freeze corn on the cob? Yes, it can be done, but with mixed results. Corn lovers are often disappointed with the mushy, rubbery texture and the cobby taste. It also takes up more space in the freezer.

You can enjoy the great taste of sweet corn all year long by following the simple, basic procedures of proper blanching and chilling.

Any use of this article must include the byline or following credit line:
Deb Botzek-Linn is a food science educator with University of Minnesota Extension.

Source: Deb Botzek-Linn, U of M Extension, (320) 203-6056, botze001@umn.edu