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## How to Freeze Corn on the Cob

If you like frozen niblets-type corn in the winter, just imagine how good it would taste if you had picked a couple of dozen ears yourself, or bought a couple dozen fresh ears from a farm stand and then quickly froze it at home! It is also one of the simplest ways to put up a vegetable for the winter. Here's how to do it, complete instructions in easy steps and completely illustrated. The corn will taste **MUCH** better than anything you've ever had from a store. If you want [directions on how to freeze corn cut off the cob \(niblets and cream style\), click here!](#)

## Ingredients and Equipment

- fresh corn on the cob - any quantity. I figure 1.5 ears per serving.
- 1 Large pot of boiling water
- Plenty of ice - about 1 tray per ear.
- Vacuum food sealer or "ziploc" type freezer bags (the freezer bag version is heavier and protects better against freezer burn.
- 2 large bowls, one filled with cold water and ice.
- 1 sharp knife
- 1 Large spoon



Ideal ear - ripe but not bloated. the kernels are still tender (easily punctured with your fingernail) and the juice is milky). White, yellow or bicolor types are all fine!

## Instructions



### Step 1 - Get yer corn!

Start with fresh corn on the cob - as fresh as you can get. If there is a delay between harvesting and freezing, put it in the refrigerator or put ice on it. The sugars break down quickly at room temperature.

### Step 2 - Husk the corn

Husk the corn and pick off as much of the silk as you can. A soft vegetable brush is the fastest and easiest way to get the remaining silk off - just don't be too rough with it.



### Step 3 - Get the pots ready

Get the largest pot you have (I use my canner) filled  $\frac{3}{4}$  full with hot water, put it on your largest burner (or straddle two burners) and get it heating to a full rolling boil..

Next, get a LARGE bowl filled with ice and cold water. You may need to buy a bag or two of ice if you are planning to do more than a dozen ears of corn.



## Step 4 - Blanch the corn.

All fruits and vegetables contain **enzymes** that, over time, break down the destroy nutrients and change the color, flavor, and texture of food during frozen storage. Corn requires a brief heat treatment, called **blanching, in boiling water or steam**, to destroy the enzymes before freezing. Blanching times generally vary from one to 10 minutes, depending on the vegetable. the duration should be just long enough to stop the action of the enzymes.

Begin counting the blanching time as soon as you place the corn in the boiling water. Cover the kettle and boil at a high temperature for the required length of time. You may use the same blanching water several times (up to 5). Be sure to add more hot water from the tap from time to time to keep the water level at the required height.

Blanching time varies depending on the type of frozen corn you are making: cut-whole kernel, cream style or corn-on-the-cob:

### Blanching times for corn-on-the-cob:

- small ears (  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches or less in diameter) 7 minutes,
- medium ears ( $1\frac{1}{4}$  to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter) 9 minutes, and large ears (over  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter) 11 minutes



Note: UC Davis research has shown that super sweet varieties typically require a shorter blanching time (2 minutes less) than other sweet corn varieties.

## Step 5 - Cool, then drain the corn



After corn is blanched, cool them quickly to prevent overcooking. Plunge the corn into a large quantity of ice-cold water (I keep adding more ice to it). A good rule of thumb: Cool for the same amount of time as the blanch step. For instance, if you blanch sweet corn for 7 minutes, then cool in ice water for 7 minutes.

Drain thoroughly.

## Step 6 - bag the corn

I love the FoodSavers ([see this page for more information](#)) with their vacuum sealing! I am not paid by them, but these things really work. If you don't have one, ziploc bags work, too, but it is hard to get as much air out of the bags. remove the air to prevent drying and freezer burn.



A vacuum-sealed FoodSaver bag is on top at left, and a hand-sealed ziploc bag below it. You can see how the FoodSaver really sucks out all the air, so the corn won't dry out or get freezer burn. That means the food inside will last many times longer. I've been using them (and their predecessor in the marketplace, Seal-a-Meal) for many years. If you're





interested, [here's where you can get one.](#)

If you choose not to vacuum seal, you can almost accomplish the same thing by wrapping each ear with Saran wrap, then put in the Ziplock bag. Saran is an excellent barrier to air and the corn will be garden fresh for 12 months

One person wrote to tell me that she uses a straw and seals the Ziploc around the straw to suck the air out of the bag, then pinches the straw and quickly removes it while pressing the seal. It works fairly well, but I'll stick to the Foodsaver, since the bags are microwaveable and much thicker than a Ziploc bag (even the Ziploc "freezer bags")

#### **Step 7 - Label the bags!**

At least put the date on them so you can eat the older ones first. With clear bags, it is pretty obvious what it is. "Sharpie" marking pens work well on plastic and won't rub off.

## Step 8 - Done!

Pop them into the freezer, on the quick freeze shelf, if you have one!

Later, when you are ready to serve the corn, it just takes about 3 or 4 minutes in the microwave (from frozen) or 5 or 6 minutes in a pot of boiling water. It doesn't need to be "cooked", just heated up!



## Tips:

Harvest early in the morning, especially if the weather is hot, to get peak flavor.

Harvest the corn at its peak maturity (milky fluid in the kernels, kernels tender, and not bloated). Immature corn is watery when cooked and over-ripe corn is chewy and doughy.

Process promptly after harvesting, or keep cooled in the fridge or with ice until then.

## Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

**Q.** I didn't know about the blanching step and I already froze my corn? Is that dangerous? Should I take the corn out of the freezer and blanch it and re-freeze it?

No, there is no health or safety problem. Blanching is done to preserve the flavor and sweetness. In fact, if you eat the corn in a matter of weeks, you probably wouldn't notice the difference. It becomes most noticeable (much less tasty and sweet) after months in the freezer, if it hadn't been blanched.

**Q.** I followed your freezing corn on the cob directions, but, even after drying it with paper towels, there is still enough water coming out of the corn that my vacuum food sealer can't seal the bag. Any ideas ?

**A.** Yup! Just pop the corn into the freeze in an ordinary ziploc bag for about an hour. That will freeze and water droplets that are left on the corn. Then take it out, put it in your vacuum bag and vacuum seal it!

**Q.** I froze corn on the cob as per your instructions but when I unthawed and cooked some it was mushy. How do I cook it? Not sure if I should cook it frozen or thaw first and how long to cook or heat.

**A.** That's an inherent problem with frozen corn-on-the-cob. But, it is better with some varieties than others. Silver Queen and many SE varieties have soft kernels. The super-sweets tend to have much firmer kernels that hold up better when frozen! Be careful not over cook the corn when blanching, too! Stick to the recommended times, and get the corn into ice water right afterwards.

Then when you reheat it, just put it into boiling water straight from the freezer. You'll want to cook it for the least time it takes to get it hot, which is normally about 5 minutes. Any overcooking, either before freezing or when you are ready to eat it, will make it more mushy.

**Q.** My sister brought me sweet corn from California where she just moved from. She asked the farmer what is the best way to freeze the cobs and he told her that his family just cut the over-growth and ends and freeze the whole cob within the cobs and silk. I did this because of the fact it took her 3 days driving in hot temps outside so I had to do something quick. I always would clean and remove the silk and then blanch for over 5 minutes and cool in ice water then I would use the food saver vacuum sealer. By not blanching will this be harmful to eat after being frozen and vacuum sealed without blanching?

**A.** No, there's no health risk; the corn just will not maintain the quality of its flavor and appearance as long in the freezer. It may have noticeably less flavor after weeks rather than months.

**Q.** When freezing sweet corn you say to start counting blanch time when you put cobs in the boiling water then boil for 4 minutes. I know that when I cook corn on the cob I put the cobs in boiling water and it takes 4 to 5 minutes before it starts boiling again, so my question is does the blanch time actually require the water to be boiling?

**A.** Yes, the temperature ought to be back up to boiling before starting the timer, if it takes more than 1 minute to return to a boil.

There's another problem at work though. If it takes that long (several minutes or more) for the water to get back to boiling, that indicates that the volume of water is too small, relative to the amount of corn added. The corn is cooling the water too much. Those of you who are physicists or thermodynamicists will recognize the problem of enthalpy here. While the water isn't at the boiling point, it's still heating the corn, which may result in loss of flavor and sugar due to overcooking.

The solution is to use a substantially larger pot, or put much less corn in each batch - or both - so the water returns to boiling in a minute or so.