

Corn Soup with Roasted Red Bell Pepper and Chipotlé Chile Purée

© By Lois Ellen Frank, Ph.D.

There is nothing like the taste of fresh sweet corn. I usually make this soup from fresh corn during the warm weather months and at Harvest time when corn is at its sweetest, but it can be made at any time of the year with organic frozen sweet corn. My favorite frozen organic sweet corn is from the frozen food section of Trader Joe's. This soup's spicy flavor comes from New Mexico red chile powder & Chipotlé chile powder, which is in the paint that is used on the soup for garnish. Chipotlé chiles are jalapeños that have been dried and then smoked. This medium-size, thick-fleshed chile is smoky and sweet and has a subtle, deep, rounded heat. In Santa Fe, local farmers sell fresh freshly ground New Mexico red chile powder as well as chipotlé chile powder, but it is also available from Made in New Mexico by mail order from their website.



Ingredients

4 ears of corn, kernels scrapped from the cob, (or 3 cups frozen corn kernels)

1 tablespoon Sunflower oil

1 medium yellow onion, diced

1 teaspoon roasted blackened garlic, finely chopped

Kosher salt, to taste

6 cups Water

1 red bell pepper, roasted, peeled, seeded and diced

½ can white beans, drained and rinsed reserving the bean liquid

½ teaspoon dried chipotle chile powder (more if you want the paint to be hotter)

1 teaspoon New Mexico red chile powder

Instructions

1. Prepare the corn by cutting the kernels from the cob. You should have approximately 3 cups of corn kernels from 4 cobs of corn. Save the corncobs and set aside. The cobs will add additional corn flavor to the soup. If using frozen corn, measure out 3 cups of corn kernels.
2. In a medium sized saucepan over medium-high heat, add the sunflower oil and heat until it is hot but not smoking. Add the onions. Sauté the onions for approximately 3 to 4 minutes until they are translucent, stirring occasionally to prevent burning. Add the roasted blackened garlic and sauté for 1 to 2 more minutes. Add the corn kernels and sauté for another 3 minutes, stirring constantly.
3. Add the salt and the water and bring the contents to a boil. (If you have cut your corn fresh from the cob, place the reserved cobs into the saucepan at this time). Once the mixture has boiled, reduce the heat and simmer for 20 minutes. Stir occasionally to prevent the corn kernels from burning or sticking to the bottom of the pan.
4. While the corn soup is simmering, roast the red bell pepper using the Open Flame method, then peel, seed, and dice it. Place the diced bell pepper into a blender with the chipotle chile powder, the New Mexico Red chile powder, and the can of white beans. Blend thoroughly for about 30 seconds. Add some of the bean liquid until you have a thick batter that you can pour into a squirt bottle to paint onto the soup. You may have to add almost all of the liquid from the can of beans. Pour the red bell pepper sauce into a plastic squirt bottle and set aside. This will be the paint for the garnish onto the top of the soup.
5. Remove the corn soup mixture from the heat, discard the corncobs and set aside. Place the corn soup mixture in a blender and puree for 3 minutes or until it is completely blended. Pour the mixture through a fine strainer or sieve and discard the contents left in the sieve once you have strained all of the corn soup through the fine strainer.
6. Return the mixture to a saucepan, and heat, over low heat until ready to serve, stirring occasionally to prevent burning. Pour into bowls, garnish by painting a design with some of the red pepper chipotle chile sauce and serve immediately.

Serves 6