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Extension Extra



College of Agriculture & Biological Sciences / College of Family & Consumer Sciences / USDA

Using Dried Corn

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Sun-dried corn has long been a staple food in the Native American diet. Corn, a low-calorie food full of vitamins and minerals, can be dried using food preservation methods of sun-drying, solar-drying, or dehydration with a home dehydrator. When dried, corn is lightweight and does not need to be refrigerated for storage. A half cup of dried corn will re-hydrate to yield one cup. Dried

corn can be used in soups and stews, eaten as a snack, or ground as cornmeal.

Traditionally, Native Americans carried large quantities of dried corn as tribes traveled from camp to camp. The following traditional recipes using dried corn have been adapted for modern use.

Beef or Buffalo Stew

Soup, in some form, is a daily dish for many Native American families. The soup kettle is often simmering on the stove for family members and friends to help themselves when hungry.

Ingredients:

2 lb stew meat, cubed
4 or 5 medium size potatoes, peeled and cubed
1 onion, chopped
1 cup dried corn
8 cups water

Directions:

1. Heat a non-stick skillet or frying pan for 3 to 5 minutes on medium heat. Add 1 tablespoon of oil or butter. Add the cubed meat once butter melts or oil is hot. Brown meat on all sides, stirring occasionally, for 5 – 7 minutes.
2. Put all ingredients into a pot, bring to a boil, then reduce heat to simmer until corn and potatoes are tender, about 1 -2 hours.

Yield: 8 cups
Serving size: 1 cup
Servings per recipe: 8

Corn Wasna / Corn Balls

Traditional wasna is made with ground dried meat mixed with dried, crushed wild berries and tallow. The mixture is shaped into patties or squares that are allowed to harden, making it easy to carry on the trail. Today, corn wasna is prepared by mixing together corn meal, sugar, dried fruit, and fat. This version of wasna is very rich and high in saturated fats.

Ingredients:

4 cups dried corn, ground (yield 3 cups ground)
1 cups raisins (other dried fruits can be substituted)
1 1/2 cups sugar
1 1/2 cups nonfat dry milk
1 teaspoon salt
1 1/2 cups melted butter

Directions:

Grind corn in a food processor or hand grinder to a very fine consistency. Mix ground corn, raisins, sugar, dry milk, and salt together. Add the melted butter slowly and mix well. Press into a baking pan (9" x 13") or shape into small balls (1 inch) and allow to cool.

Yield: 32 pieces
Serving size: 1 piece
Servings per recipe: 32

Beef or Buffalo Stew, Nutrient content per serving:

Calories: 470
Fat: 14 g
Cholesterol: 115 mg
Sodium: 90 mg
Carbohydrates: 41 g
Fiber: 2 g
Protein: 41 g

Corn Wasna / Corn Balls, nutrient content per serving:

Calories: 200
Fat: 9 g
Cholesterol: 25 mg
Sodium: 95 mg
Carbohydrates: 27 g
Fiber: 2 g
Protein: 3 g

References:

Northern Plains Indian: Food Practices, Customs and Holidays, American Dietetic Association, Inc., 1999

Wasna recipe adapted from a recipe retrieved from <http://www.indiancountry.com/content.cfm?id=1096410196>

For information about how to sun-dry, solar dry or dehydrate corn:

ExEx 14090 Sun-drying Corn, http://agbiopubs.sdstate.edu/pub_description.cfm?Item=ExEx14090

ExEx 14091 Solar Drying Fruits and Vegetables, http://agbiopubs.sdstate.edu/pub_description.cfm?Item=ExEx14091

National Center for Home Food Preservation, <http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/how/dry.html>

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