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More information the web at  
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Oh, it's true. We are well and truly on the backside of summer. In spite of the recent dog days of August, we are ready to slide into fall and back-to-school. On the plus side, passing summer's midpoint means that it is time for one of life's small but truly wonderful pleasures. Sweet corn is at its peak. Is there anything better than fresh, local corn? Roast it or boil it, just don't overcook it! Eaten right off the cob or thrown into a salad, salsa or soup it is the perfect addition to any summer meal.

I lived in Switzerland for many years. Living abroad gives you the opportunity to try, taste and experience many new things. Switzerland is filled with mountains, alpine meadows and cows. So I skied a lot, hiked a lot and gained a new appreciation for all things dairy, particularly chocolate and cheese. But living abroad also forces you to make some adjustments and leave some things behind.

Large cups of weak but still bitter coffee became a thing of my past. Instead, I quickly learned to love café au lait and espresso. Donuts and muffins were replaced with croissants. I learned to make do without a big, fat Sunday morning newspaper but was delighted to bump into the Prairie Home Companion on one of the many short lived English radio stations. I heard weekly tales from Lake Wobegon for at least a year. I discovered French films. I couldn't give up American movies and figured out that the early showings were in English (with subtitles). However, television, I skipped altogether. Now settled back in the States, insomnia and Nick-at-Night has allowed me to catch up with all eight seasons of the Cosby Show. I religiously followed my hometown sports teams for awhile, but after about a decade, I must confess I sort of lost interest. It's still taking some time to rekindle that enthusiasm.

But there are some things you never get over, some things you miss from the first day of your overseas adventure until the day you come home. I always missed my family and tried to visit at least twice a year. And books, even as my French improved, I couldn't give up reading in English. At the end of any trip to the States or England, I stuffed a ton of paperbacks into my suitcase. And I never, ever stopped missing sweet corn.

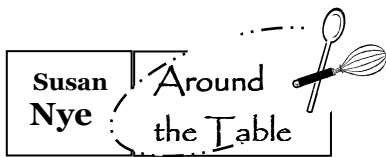
Early on I lived near Bern and had a colleague who grew a few stalks of corn in her back yard. She was from Ohio and her uncle sent her seeds every year. She invited me over once or twice for a corn feast. Within a year, I changed jobs and moved down to Geneva. We kept in touch for awhile, but I never made it back for corn.

While Geneva is truly an international city with the UN and lots of multinational companies, when I was there, corn was for cows, not for people. The farmers' markets were filled with beans, tomatoes and zucchini but no corn. Sure the supermarket shelves were stocked with cans from Del Monte but that's a pale facsimile to the real thing. Once in desperation, I joined a tiny band of corn-loving Americans and stole (yes stole!) cow corn from a farmer's field. We were never caught and as far as I know Interpol is not after us but the caper was fruitless. Our crime did not pay because after all, cow corn tastes like, well ... cow corn.

Now that I am back in New Hampshire my days of thievery and longing are over. Delicious sweet corn is plentiful. Why not pick up a few ears at the farm stand or farmers' market and celebrate summer with family and friends. Enjoy!

Enjoy summer's bounty and bon appétit!

Susan



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**Corn and Chicken Chowder**

*Towards the end of every summer, I make corn stock by the gallon and freeze it. It may seem silly or like a lot of work but on a grey November day I can make up a batch of chowder and treat myself to a taste of August sunshine. Enjoy!*

Serves 10-12

8 ears corn, 6-8 cups kernels  
1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breast  
2-3 ounces bacon, diced  
4 carrots  
5 celery stalks  
2 onions  
2 medium potatoes, cut in bite-sized pieces  
1 tablespoon hot sauce or to taste  
2 tablespoon fresh thyme  
1 tablespoon fresh, chopped sage  
2 bay leaves  
1 cup dry white wine  
4-6 cups chicken stock  
1 cup half & half (optional)  
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper  
Garnish: fresh, chopped parsley

**Make the corn stock:**

Cut the kernels off the cobs and set aside. Quarter 1 onion, 1 stalk celery and 1 carrot. Combine 3 quarts of water with the corn cobs, onion, celery and carrot. Add 1 bay leaf, 1 tablespoon thyme and salt and pepper to taste. Bring to a boil and then reduce to a simmer for 1 hour.

Strain and discard the solids. Refrigerate until ready to use.

**Make the soup:**

In a stock pot, over medium heat cook the bacon until crispy. Remove the bacon from the pot and drain on paper towels.

Cut the remaining onion, celery and carrots into bite size pieces. Remove most of the bacon fat from the pot; add the onion, celery, carrots and hot sauce and cook, stirring from time to time for about 10 minutes.

Add the reserved corn stock, chicken stock, wine, chicken, potato, remaining thyme and bay leaf and the sage to the stock pot. Bring to a boil and then reduce to a simmer. Cook for 20-30 minutes or until the vegetables are tender and the chicken is cooked through.

Remove the chicken from the pot and let it cool. Add the corn and simmer for 2-3 minutes more. Remove about 2 cups of the vegetables and broth from the pot. Puree it in a blender or food processor and then add it back to the soup.

When the chicken is cool enough to handle, shred or cut it into bite sized pieces and add back to the soup. Add the half & half. Refrigerate the soup for several hours or overnight to mix and meld the flavors.

Reheat slowly until steaming. Adjust the seasoning. Garnish with chopped parsley and serve.