



In the Kitchen

with Barb Agee

August 2012

Corn and Tomatoes - Bounty from the Garden

Straight from the garden tomatoes and corn are so close to perfection that they only need salt and pepper. Choose locally grown tomatoes and corn to ensure that fresh flavor. Pair them together for tasty quick summer meals.

Corn and Tomato Gratin

- | | |
|---|--|
| 4 to 5 large tomatoes, cut crosswise into 1/8-inch thick slices | 3 cups fresh whole-grain bread crumbs |
| 2 teaspoons salt | 1 cup fresh basil, coarsely chopped |
| 1 teaspoon freshly ground pepper | 1/4 cup Serrano pepper, finely chopped |
| 4 cups (6 to 8 ears) fresh corn kernels | 1 cup (2 ounces) parmesan cheese, grated |
| 1 cup heavy cream | 4 tablespoons unsalted butter |
| 1/2 cup whole milk | 4 slices of bacon, browned and crumbled |

Arrange tomato slices on a rack set in a shallow pan. Sprinkle both sides of tomato slices with salt. Let drain 30 minutes.

Add corn, cream, milk and 1/2 teaspoon salt in a heavy sauce pan and bring to a boil over medium high heat. Reduce heat and continue to simmer for 5 minutes, until corn is tender. Pour into a glass bowl to cool slightly. Melt butter in heavy skillet; add bread crumbs and coat evenly with the melted butter; slightly toast. Cool. Lightly toss bread crumbs, basil, Serrano pepper, cheese, bacon crumbles and 1 teaspoon salt and pepper together.

Generously butter a 9x13-inch glass baking dish. Arrange one third of the tomato slices in baking dish. Sprinkle one third of the bread crumb mixture evenly over tomatoes. Spoon one half of corn mixture over crumb mixture. Repeat layering another third of tomatoes, crumb mixture and the remainder of the corn. Layer the remaining tomatoes over the top. Finish with the remaining bread crumbs and butter.

Bake at 375°F on middle rack of the oven for 40 to 45 minutes. Cool on a rack for 15 minutes before serving.



Corny Cajun Shrimp

16 ounces of corn kernels, fresh, frozen or canned
1/2 cup chopped green pepper
1 cup onion, chopped
1 cup celery, thin sliced
1 tablespoon olive oil

One 14½ can diced tomatoes with green chiles
1 tablespoon fresh thyme
1 teaspoon creole seasoning
8 ounces frozen shrimp, cooked and peeled
2 ounces smoky ham, cut into small cubes

In a large heavy skillet, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add onion, celery, green pepper and thyme; sauté for 3 to 4 minutes. Add corn, tomatoes and creole seasoning. Cook until vegetables are tender, approximately 5 more minutes. Stir in shrimp and heat through, about 2 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.

Tomato Watermelon Salad

5 cups seedless watermelon, chilled and diced
2 tablespoons aged balsamic vinegar
1 tablespoon mixed fresh herbs*, chopped
¼ teaspoon coriander seed
3 to 4 medium heirloom tomatoes, cored and cut into ¾-inch chunks
1 small English cucumber, chilled, peeled and cut into ½ inch chunks

3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
1 cup pitted Nicoise olives
1 cup (about 4 ounces) feta cheese, crumbled (*optional*)

In a bowl combine the tomatoes, watermelon and cucumber. Grind the coriander. In a separate bowl, add herbs and ground coriander. Toss lightly. Sprinkle herbs and coriander evenly over tomato, watermelon and cucumber.

In a small bowl, whisk together balsamic vinegar, olive oil, and salt and pepper to taste. Pour over tomato mixture and toss to coat evenly. Refrigerate for 30 minutes before serving.

* in any combination: basil, tarragon, chives, and cilantro

Roasted Cherry Tomato Bisque

2½ pounds cherry tomatoes, halved
8 cloves garlic, peeled
½ sweet onion, quartered
3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon Kosher salt

1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves, chopped
1 can chicken broth
1½ cups half and half
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar

In a large bowl, add olive oil, salt and thyme leaves and mix together. Add tomatoes and onion, toss to coat evenly. Spread in glass baking pans. Do not crowd the tomatoes and onions. Roast at 425°F. for 35 minutes, stirring once.

Transfer tomatoes, onions and any accumulated liquid to a soup pot. Add chicken broth and 1 cup water. Bring to a simmer; cook for 10 minutes. Puree tomato mixture in blender in batches until smooth, or use an emersion blender. Return tomato to soup pot and stir in half and half and balsamic vinegar. Cook about 3 minutes until heated through. Do not boil.

