

The Survival Foods And Gardening Section

MAKE YOUR OWN CORN NUTS

by Kurt Saxon

You must be familiar with corn nuts. They are put up in plastic snack bags and are sold in most gas station markets. They cost about 25 cents an ounce and are made from Hickory King Corn, a larger type than feed corn.

The only difference between Hickory King and other varieties is the size. There is no difference in taste. So you can make all the corn nuts you like and be assured they are just as good as the commercial kind and cost next to nothing.

Corn nuts are a variation of parched corn. Indians and pioneers ate parched corn almost as a staple while traveling. It -was very nutritious and took up little space so was considered an excellent trail food.

Parched corn was made by Indians by putting dried corn on hot rocks or in hot coals. You can make parched corn by simply covering the bottom of a greaseless frying pan with corn and stirring until the kernels are uniformly brown.

Corn nuts are a little more refined. As a sample batch, use one cup of whole corn, bought from any feed or health food store. Soak the kernels in two cups of water for three days, in the refrigerator .

Pour off the water and dry the kernels in a towel. Heat up about four cups of grease; bacon, lard, vegetable oil; it doesn't matter. When it is so hot a drop of water sputters on its top, lower a heaping tablespoon of kernels into the middle of the grease. The grease will then begin to boil violently. You have to know how it will react so you won't be tempted to just dump the whole cup in and watch the grease erupt all over the stove.

Make sure any handle to the container is turned toward the back of the stove, especially if you have a child standing by. Also, stand back as an occasional kernel will pop like popcorn.

At first the kernels will sink to the bottom and most will rise to the surface as their moisture departs. When they float to the surface watch until they turn copper brown.

Take out a kernel occasionally, let it cool a minute and chew it. If it's chewey it's not done. When it crunches and shatters it is. Then scoop the browned kernels out

onto a piece of newspaper to absorb the grease.

Now you can continue a heaping tablespoonfull at a time and cook them about three minutes or, cautiously and slowly pour the rest of the cup in. After the boiling stops the kernels will rise and simmer on top. But the whole cupful will cause the grease to cool some so the real cooking will take about fifteen minutes.

All you're doing is deep frying them. You can experiment with a shallow frying pan or a deep fat cooker. The result will be the same. With salt, they will be delicious.

Don't use the same grease for more than three or more batches. The heat breaks down its molecules in time -and it can be unhealthful.

You might also try deep fat frying soybeans. They are tasty but not so much as corn nuts. Soybeans need only be soaked overnight. Also, they cook in a shorter time and are lighter than copper brown and do not become exactly crunchy; something between chewy and crunchy. Munchy. Tasty with salt.

Both corn nuts and deep fried soybeans can be mixed for party snack bowls or while watching TV.

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