

Creamy One-Pot Orzo with Corn and Bacon

By Samantha Seneviratne

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Time: 40 minutes

Servings: 4

"In "Eat Your Vegetables: Bold Recipes for the Single Cook," Joe Yonan suggests grating corn to take the kernels off and extract the delicious milky pulp from the cob. This method maximizes the amount of pure corn flavor that you can add to any dish. Here, most of the corn is grated to create a super creamy, one-pot pasta that tastes sweet and summery. Calabrian chile paste, which is usually made of chiles from the Calabria region of Italy, oil and vinegar add heat, acidity and a bit of smokiness to this dish. If you can't find it, swap in some homemade red chile sauce or harissa."

Ingredients

4 large ears corn, husked

6 ounces bacon, cut into pieces

12 ounces orzo

2 cups chicken broth

Kosher salt

1 cup basil, thinly sliced, plus more for garnish

1 to 2 tablespoons Calabrian chile paste (or harissa or homemade chile sauce), to taste

1 cup whole-milk ricotta cheese, for serving

Preparation

1. Split each cob in half crosswise. Using the large holes of a box grater set over a shallow bowl or rimmed baking sheet, take off the kernels and as much corn liquid as possible from 6 halves. Using a sharp knife, cut the kernels off of the remaining cob and keep separate.
2. In a large skillet with high sides, cook the bacon over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until browned and crisp, about 6 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, remove the bacon and set aside.
3. Add the whole corn kernels to the skillet and cook until softened, about 2 minutes. Remove with a slotted spoon and set aside with the crisp bacon. Wipe out the skillet.
4. Add the orzo and cook until lightly toasted, 1 minute, stirring often. Add the broth and 2 cups water and bring to a simmer. Cook, stirring often, until the orzo is al dente and the liquid is mostly absorbed, about 8 minutes. (You can add a little more water if necessary.) Season to taste with salt.
5. Stir in the grated corn and liquid, cooked corn kernels, bacon, basil and chile paste. Season to taste with salt. Serve topped with ricotta and more basil.

Donna's Notes: I used one 16-ounce box of orzo without changing the quantity of liquid. I used the back side of a chef's knife to scrape off the corn liquid.