



## Shakespeare in the Kitchen

*“FRIENDS, ROMANS, COUNTRYMEN, LEND ME YOUR EARS.”* Mark Antony was working the crowd. Brutus and the conspirators had it in for Julius Caesar, and Mr. Antony was cleverly dissuading them from attacking his friend. Meanwhile, his love interest, Cleopatra, was getting ready for her evening of revelry.

Timing is everything. Had they been born just a short time later...say 1400 years...Mark Antony could have been asking for ears of corn. On a warm, Roman night he could have been grilling ears of corn, while Cleopatra tossed (char)coal on the fire instead of kohl on her eyelids. Certainly, poor Julius Caesar would have preferred the riotous laughter and camaraderie from this feast rather than the riot Brutus was fomenting. Corn on the grill with a frosty glass of mead. Yum!

Corn was harvested in the Americas more than 7,000 years ago. It was introduced to Europe by Christopher Columbus. For that reason alone, Europeans should have Columbus Day celebrations with parades and time off from school. Just imagine Italian cuisine without polenta; hard to do.

Every year I look forward to the arrival of these golden ears of corn. Evidently, I'm not alone as the crowds around the corn stand are always large. I buy corn as soon as it arrives at the store or stand, knowing it's too early for the corn to be sweet. This year, however, has been a marvelous exception. Even the ears that arrived early had kernels that were tender and oh, so flavorful. What a versatile vegetable this is. Corn bread, muffins, grits. Delicious. And how about popcorn? Tell me that doesn't get your taste buds going. Imagine Battle

Creek, Michigan without corn flakes. I can't.

Normally, I just shuck the corn, boil it for a few minutes, then slather it with butter and a sprinkling of salt—there's nothing wrong with that. But last week, after buying way more corn than we could possibly eat, I ventured into new territory. I made corn soup and corn cakes, as well as cornbread stuffing which I served under a super thick pork chop.

This weekend, we're invited to a friend's home in Michigan. She suggested we stop at the large farmer's market near her house to stock up on fruits and vegetables for dinner and breakfast. I volunteered to make a grilled corn salad by the cookbook author, Alison Roman. It fits the bill in all the right ways...it's grilled, it's easy, it's delicious. U

## Grilled Corn Salad with Cheese and Corn Nuts

### INGREDIENTS:

6 ears of corn, husks on

2 tablespoons fresh lime juice

½ small red onion, thinly sliced

¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes (more, if desired)

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 cup cilantro, tender stems and leaves

4 ounces firm fresh cheese, such as queso fresco or other firm cheese, finely chopped

½ cup corn nuts, coarsely chopped



### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Heat a grill to high (you can also roast the corn in a preheated 450-degree oven for about 30-40 minutes). Place the corn on the grill and don't bother it, except to turn it a few times, for 30 minutes, or until it's a crazy golden-yellow color with spots of char from the grill. If it needs more time, throw it back on and check again in 10 minutes or so.
2. Meanwhile, combine the lime juice, onion and red pepper flakes in a large bowl. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
3. Once the corn comes off the grill, let it get cool enough to handle. Shuck it and strip the kernels off the cob. The easiest way to do this is to hold the corn by the stem and place it in a large bowl. Starting at the top, using a sharp knife or serrated knife, get as close to the cob as possible and shave the kernels off; they should land in the bowl rather than scatter all over your counter and kitchen floor.
4. Add the onion mixture to the bowl with the kernels and season with salt and pepper, tossing to coat. Add the cilantro, cheese and corn nuts. Taste and add more salt, red pepper flakes and lime juice if needed to make sure it's good and limey. *Recipe adapted from "Dining In" by Alison Roman. Serves 4*



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