

# CORN

GLASS GEM  
CORN

VARIOUS  
SOUTHWEST CORN

NIXTAMALIZED CORN

## Origin and Migration

Corn was originally grown in Mesoamerica, in Mexico to be precise. Around 9000 years ago a simpler version of corn, *Teocintle*, was grown wildly in the Tehuacan Valley. From there, corn migrated along with native tribes, evolving and diversifying as it moved through North and South America. Corn was vital, its domestication transformed nomadic lifestyles into more permanent settlements. Agriculture and subsistence farming using corn was part of the Incan culture, Aztec empire, and ultimately to the numerous Native American tribes in North America.

## Diversity in the United States

Maize is a versatile plant that adapts easily to different types of soil, altitude, climate, and irrigation. Due to this quality, there are around 300 varieties of corn in the American continent. The different colors of corn are determined by its phytochemicals. Different flavors are given by its carbohydrate and nutrient composition. Different textures come from the varying moisture content. The oldest maize traces found in the US are 4000 years old and belong to the Southwestern regions. The earliest corn in the US was Chapalote corn. The main types of corn include dent, flint, popcorn, sweet, and flour corn.

### Corn distribution in the US

Animal feed  
33.3%

The majority of corn consumed in the US is in the form of processed goods with high fructose corn syrup such as beverages, sweets, breakfast cereals, and salty snacks. A small amount of corn goes into less processed foods such as corn chips, grits, and corn oil.

Ethanol  
33.3%

Human consumption  
33.3%

## Nutritional Benefits

Corn is both a nutritious, starchy vegetable and a whole grain! It contains carbohydrates, proteins, fats, and is rich in fiber, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. Corn's main component is complex carbohydrates found in the endosperm. The outer layer, the pericarp, contains most of the fiber and 98% of the antioxidants, some of which include carotenoids, lutein, and zeaxanthin. These phytochemicals have been associated with improved eye health. The fiber found in corn may also help reduce the risk of heart disease and some cancers, and supports a healthy microbiome. Heirloom varieties of maize with varying colors and lengths are more likely to be grown organically and are never genetically modified.

1 cup of sweet corn (164g) has: 177 calories, 41g carbohydrate, 5g protein, 2g fat, 5g fiber, 17% DV (daily value) vitamin C, 24% DV vitamin B1, 19% DV vitamin B9, 11% DV magnesium, 10% DV potassium

