

## Data Sheet: Corn Plant (Corn)

Corn, also known as maize, was originally cultivated from grass by the Indigenous peoples in southern Mexico about 10,000 years ago. The leafy stalk of the plant produced flower structures, called ears, that produced kernels, or seeds.

Today corn is a staple food in many parts of the world. While it is the largest produced crop in the world, very little of the corn grown is used for direct human consumption. Some of the corn produced is used to make biofuels, animal feed, and other consumer products. Corn is one of the crops the federal government encourages farms to grow because it has so many uses and helps protect us from food shortages.

There are six major types of corn: dent corn, flint corn, pod corn, popcorn, flour corn, and sweet corn. When we think about corn as a vegetable on a lunch tray, we are eating sweet corn, while many farm animals are fed dent corn.

One corn stalk produces one ear of corn a year. Some of the corn produced is used for food for humans, but corn is also used for a wide variety of industrialized food products including cooking oil, corn starch, corn syrup, and grain alcohol.

### Why is corn on the lunch tray?

Corn	
Nutrition Facts	
Serving size	½ Cup (123g)
<b>Calories</b>	<b>60</b>
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 0.5g	<b>1%</b>
Saturated Fat 0g	<b>0%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 260mg	<b>11%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrates</b> 11g	<b>4%</b>
Dietary Fiber 2g	<b>7%</b>
Total Sugars 5g	
<b>Protein</b> 2g	<b>4%</b>
Vitamin D	0%
Calcium 4mg	0%
Iron	0%
Potassium 160mg	4%
*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a human's daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.	

Corn is one of the most grown crops in the United States as well as the world. While most of the variety that is produced is used to feed animals, a small percentage of it is used to produce sweet corn used for human consumption. Raw yellow sweet corn kernels are composed of 76% water, 19% carbohydrates, 3% protein, and 1% fat. While corn does not have a lot of micronutritional value, it is widely available, and therefore, it shows up in many school lunch programs.

## Understanding and caring for corn plants

It is important for farmers to understand the different stages of development of corn stalk and what it needs to thrive if they want to be successful in producing the greatest amount of corn during the harvest. Corn plants need to be planted in soil by other corn plants because corn is pollinated with the help of wind. One acre of land can be planted with 30,000 corn plants. Corn plants have a shallow root system; corn must be planted in spring in temperate climates because it is cold-intolerant. When corn sprouts, leaves emerge from the shoot in a telescoping fashion until flowering. The leaves are essential in helping the plants transfer energy from the sun to supply carbohydrates to the rest of the plant including the kernels of corn we consume. Corn is very water-sensitive. It is important that the soil doesn't lose its moisture. Corn needs around 10 gallons of water weekly. Many modern farming techniques have been developed to prevent water loss from the soil. Farmers typically harvest corn during late summer to mid-autumn.



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