

ATULEN ILOTES

Adapted from Alice Maxwell's Recipes of Guam

This is the corn soup of the 1950s and earlier. OMG, it is better than any corn soup with chicken I've ever had. Wow! Just make it, just go, do it now, go buy some fresh sweet corn. In fact, the sooner you cook and eat the corn from it being picked, the better the flavor. Corn loses sweetness as the sugar converts to starch once it has been picked. Don't overboil the soup once you've added the m^åsa, cobs, and corn to the water as cooking corn too long will reduce the sweetness of the corn.

Makes about 12 cups corn soup

INGREDIENTS

Set 1

10 medium ears of fresh sweet corn with husk (makes 7 to 8 cups of kernels)

1 cup water

1 ½ tablespoons salt

Set 2

10 to 12 cups water

Set 3

1 cup fresh m^åsa

1 can + 1 cup thick coconut milk

1 teaspoon ground black pepper, optional

Tools: large bowl, tiny bowl, knife, large pot, colander, medium bowl, whisk, rubber spatula

DIRECTIONS

Cut about a half inch off the hairy end of the corn. Peel the husk off, leaving some hairs, and leaving the stem attached to the cob. Repeat for all cobs.

Place the tiny bowl upside down in the large bowl. Hold one cob by the stem and place the other end of the cob on top of the tiny bowl. Use a knife to cut the kernels away from the cob, cutting as close to the cob as possible. Use the back of the knife to scrape the cob. Add the scrapings to the bowl. Repeat for all cobs. Cut the stem off the cobs then set the cobs aside.

Pour 10 cups of water into the large pot and bring to a boil.

In the meantime, remove the tiny bowl from the pile of corn kernels. Add the salt and 1 cup of water. Squeeze the mixture with both hands to make corn milk. Squeeze about 5 to 10 minutes. You should see a decent amount of milk. Place the medium bowl in the colander and strain. Set aside.

Once the water comes to a boil, add the m^åsa to the pot, using a whisk to incorporate. Bring to a simmer then simmer for 5 minutes. If you leave out the m^åsa, the soup will be quite thin.

Add the cobs and the corn kernels. Gently boil for 10 minutes. At this point, don't overboil the soup as cooking corn too long will reduce the sweetness of the corn.

Add the corn milk and the coconut milk. Simmer for 5 minutes to heat through. If the atulen ilotes is too thick or too sweet for your tastes, add the remaining cups of water, 1 cup at a time.

Taste and add more salt if needed. And black pepper if you like. Remove the cobs if desired.

Recipe courtesy Paula Lujan Quinene of PaulaQ.com.