

Native Americans have been drying food for thousands of years. By sun-drying many different foods, families were able to survive the harsh winter months. Drying food also brought the advantage of making the harvest easier to store and transport; the loss of water concentrated nutrients and lightened the weight of the food itself. One common food that was dried was corn, as it was easily stored and preserved during the winter. They dried the corn on mats in the sun. Dried corn was often made into hominy by soaking corn in water until the kernels split open, this was then drained and fried over a fire. Corn meal was also made from dried corn and used for cornbread, corn syrup or corn pudding. Today, dried corn can be found at some grocery stores or can be dried at home using a food dehydrator.

One of the most common uses for dried corn was dried corn soup, made by soaking dried kernels in water, then boiling them in broth to make a nourishing soup.

Dried Corn Soup

Makes 6 Servings

Ingredients:

- ¾ cup dried corn
- 7 cups water
- 5 oz. dried beef
- 1/8 tsp. fresh ground pepper

Directions:

- Soak the corn in 2 cups of water for 48 hours.
- Place the corn and its soaking water in a large saucepan. Add the remaining water and simmer, covered, for about 4 hours or until the corn is tender but not too soft.
- Mix in the dried beef and pepper, and simmer, stirring, for 10 minutes more. Serve hot.