



Mexican Street Corn Salad (Esquites)

Ingredients:

- 4 cups corn kernels (fresh, frozen, or canned — about 5–6 ears if using fresh)
- 2 tablespoons butter or olive oil
- 1/3 cup mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons sour cream or Mexican crema
- 1/2 teaspoon chili powder (plus extra for garnish)
- 1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika (optional, for extra depth)
- 1/4 teaspoon cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon salt (plus more to taste)
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/2 cup cotija cheese (or feta if cotija isn't available), crumbled
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice (about 1 lime)
- 1 small jalapeño, finely diced (optional, for a little heat)

Instructions:

1. **Cook the Corn:**
 - Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat.

- Add the butter or oil. Once hot, add the corn kernels.
 - Cook, stirring occasionally, until the corn starts to char slightly, about 6–8 minutes. (You want a little golden-brown color for that street corn flavor!)
 - Remove from heat and let cool for a few minutes.
2. **Mix the Dressing:**
In a large bowl, whisk together the mayonnaise, sour cream, chili powder, paprika, cumin, salt, pepper, and lime juice.
3. **Combine the Salad:**
Add the cooked corn to the dressing and toss until evenly coated.
Stir in the cotija cheese, cilantro, and jalapeño (if using).
4. **Garnish and Serve:**
Sprinkle extra cheese, chili powder, and a few more cilantro leaves on top. Serve warm, at room temperature, or chilled!
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Tips:

- **Grilling the corn on the cob** before cutting the kernels off gives an even smokier flavor.
- Add **diced avocado** for a creamier version.
- Perfect as a **side dish** for tacos, grilled meats, or as part of a festive spread!