

REDUCED-FAT CORN CHOWDER

Serves 6

Don't substitute frozen corn for fresh. Because it's parcooked, frozen corn won't release the starchy liquid that flavors and thickens our soup.

- 10 ears corn, kernels cut from cobs (7½ cups)**
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour**
- 2 slices bacon, chopped fine**
- 1 onion, chopped fine**
- Salt and pepper**
- 2 garlic cloves, minced**
- 3¾ cups chicken broth**
- 1¾ cups 1 percent low-fat milk**
- 10 ounces red potatoes, unpeeled, cut into ½-inch pieces**
- 1 teaspoon minced fresh thyme**
- 1 bay leaf**
- ⅓ cup half-and-half**
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh chives**

1. Process 3¾ cups corn kernels in food processor until smooth, about 2 minutes. Set fine-mesh strainer over 2-cup liquid measuring cup and line strainer with double layer of cheesecloth. Transfer pureed corn to strainer, gather corners of cheesecloth together, and squeeze 1¼ cups liquid from corn into measuring cup. Discard corn solids. Whisk flour into corn liquid until no lumps remain.

2. Cook bacon in Dutch oven over medium heat until beginning to crisp, about 5 minutes. Reduce heat to low; add onion, 1 teaspoon salt, and ½ teaspoon pepper; and cook, covered, until softened, about 10 minutes. Add garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add corn liquid mixture and cook, stirring constantly, until thickened to paste-like consistency, about 3 minutes. Slowly whisk in broth until incorporated. Cook until thickened slightly, about 5 minutes.

3. Add milk, potatoes, thyme, and bay leaf and bring to boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer for 7 minutes. Add remaining 3¾ cups corn and half-and-half and return to simmer. Simmer until kernels are tender yet firm, 10 to 12 minutes. Discard bay leaf. Stir in chives. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve.