Sides / Mexico

Esquites (Mexican Street Corn Salad)

Charred corn kernels tossed warm with crema, lime, cotija, and chile powder — all the drama of elote in a cup, the kernels popping with sweetness against the salty, creamy, spicy dressing.

Time 25 min **Servings** 4

What you'll need.

- ☐ 500 g Fresh corn kernels (from 4 ears) or frozen
- ☐ 80 g Mexican crema or sour cream
- ☐ 40 g Mayonnaise
- ☐ 60 g Cotija cheese, crumbled
- ☐ 30 ml Fresh lime juice
- ☐ 5 g Chile powder or tajín
- ☐ 30 g Scallions, thinly sliced
- ☐ 10 g Fresh cilantro, chopped
- ☐ 3 g Salt
- ☐ 15 g Butter or neutral oil

Let's make it.

01 Heat a wide, dry cast-iron skillet or heavy pan over the highest possible heat until you can hold your palm 5cm above the surface for only 1–2 seconds. Add the butter, let it foam and begin to brown, then add the corn kernels in a single, uncrowded layer — you may need to do this in two batches. Do not stir for 2 full minutes. Let the bottom layer of corn make hard contact with the hot pan and char. Then toss once and let it sit for another 90 seconds. The goal is visible black charring on some kernels with others remaining golden — a variety of char is more interesting than uniform browning.

02 While the corn is still hot, transfer to a bowl. Add the crema, mayonnaise, lime juice, chile powder, and sliced scallions. Toss immediately — the heat from the corn will warm the dressing and help it coat every kernel. Taste and adjust: more lime for brightness, more chile for heat, a pinch of salt if needed. The dressing should be creamy, tangy, and spicy — each bite should have all four elements simultaneously.

03 Transfer to cups or a serving bowl. Scatter the crumbled cotija generously over the top — it should look like a snow of salty cheese. Add the chopped cilantro. Finish with an extra dusting of chile powder on top for visual contrast and an additional hit of heat. Serve immediately — this is a hot dish and the textural contrast of the charred kernels diminishes as they cool.

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Servings are an estimate; check quantities in the source recipe.
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