



## BITE by BITE

Conquering My Culinary  
Bucket List One Dish at a Time  
By Emily Banks Wooten

"I prefer winter and fall, when you feel the bone structure of the landscape. Something waits beneath it; the whole story doesn't show."

-ANDREW WYETH

# 'Cooking scrappy' is very rewarding

## And saves money too

**B**ack in the summer when the fresh produce was plentiful, there were several different things that

I made with fresh corn on the cob and I got in the habit of putting the naked cobs in a zip top freezer bag and tossing them in the freezer. It may sound crazy ... but I had an idea for them. I knew that put in a Dutch oven with a number of other components, they would be a fantastic start to a corn chowder. So on a cold winter day recently, I retrieved my bag of frozen cobs from the freezer and made a delicious corn and potato chowder.

I probably wouldn't have even thought of it had it not been for Joel Gamoran. Several years ago, Gamoran was the guest on "The Kitchen Counter Podcast," one of the many podcasts that I listen to. If you're interested, go to [kitchencounterpodcast.com](http://kitchencounterpodcast.com) and look up episode 164 called "Let's Cook Scrappy with Joel Gamoran." Roger Anderson, the host of the podcast, describes Gamoran

as "one of the nation's most well-known sustainability-focused chefs and food scrap user extraordinaire."

The episode was both entertaining and informative and the biggest takeaway of all is that there are so many food items we throw away (myself included) that we can save and actually repurpose in myriad ways.

An example Gamoran uses is lobster. He can buy a lobster for \$20, steam it and eat it and it's a \$20 meal. But if he takes the shells of that same lobster and roasts them, covers them with water and makes lobster broth, he can then make lobster bisque. So one \$20 meal now becomes two \$10 meals. Additionally, if he takes the lobster paste from inside the body cavity of the lobster, he can make lobster rolls and now he has three meals for \$6.67 each. "Cooking scrappy gets the most out of what you buy and allows you to stretch your food dollars to the very brink," Gamoran explains.

An easier, and perhaps more downhome, way to look at it is this - carrot tops, onion skins, garlic skins, broccoli stems,



Before I was familiar with Joel Gamoran and "cooking scrappy," I threw away salmon skins, onion skins, garlic skins, celery leaves, broccoli stems and lemon rinds. Now, however, I freeze all of these items and repurpose them in other dishes.

potato peelings and numerous other items can be used to make a delicious vegetable stock, or combine with a chicken carcass for a chicken stock. Used coffee grounds can be used in multiple desserts or as a rub for steaks. The rinds from any citrus fruit are excellent zested and used to top desserts, add to vinaigrettes or rim cocktail glasses. Shrimp shells

make a delightful shrimp stock that can be a basis for a number of other things. And corn cobs add an authentic taste to a corn chowder even when you're using frozen corn.

Chowder is a thick soup prepared with milk or cream, a roux, and seafood or vegetables. According to [britannica.com](http://britannica.com), the word chowder is a corruption of the French

"Winter is the time for comfort, for good food and warmth, for the touch of a friendly hand and for a talk beside the fire: It is the time for home."

-EDITH SITWELL

chaudière ("cauldron"), and chowder may have originated among Breton fishermen who brought the custom to Newfoundland, from whence it spread to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and New England. According to [munchery.com](http://munchery.com), the origins of chowder can be traced back to the early days of American settlement, when it was created by fishermen in coastal New England. Clams were abundant in the region, and the soup was a popular way to use up leftover seafood.

Regardless of how or where it originated, I promise you a good chowder will provide stick-to-your-ribs nourishment, comfort and warmth on an otherwise bone-chilling winter day. ■

# One-Pot Corn & Potato Chowder

From [thenaturalnurturer.com](http://thenaturalnurturer.com)

- 4 ears fresh corn, shucked (4 cups corn kernels).  
If using frozen corn, see notes
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon butter, or additional oil
- 1 cup finely chopped onion
- ¾ cup finely chopped celery
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1½ teaspoons kosher salt, divided, or to taste
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper

- 2 teaspoons minced fresh thyme, or 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- ⅛ teaspoon ground cayenne pepper, or to taste
- 4 cups low-sodium vegetable broth, or chicken broth if vegetarian is not needed
- 12 oz. small yellow potatoes, cut into ½-inch pieces (or Russet potatoes, peeled)
- 2 cups milk, whole for best flavor but 2% will also work
- 2 Tablespoons minced chives

"Chowder breathes poetry into the humblest pot."

-LOUIS P. DE GOUY

- Cut the corn off the cob and use the back of your knife to scrape down to remove all the "milk" and small bits of corn leftover in the cob. Set the corn aside, but don't throw the cobs away because you'll use them to flavor the broth later.

- Heat oil and butter over medium heat in a large soup pot or Dutch oven. Add the onion and celery and cook for 2 minutes to soften. Stir in the garlic, 1 teaspoon salt, pepper, thyme, and cayenne pepper. Cook for an additional minute to combine the flavors.

- Pour in the vegetable broth then add the corn cobs to the pot. (You may have to snap the cobs in half to make them fit.) Simmer for 10 to 15 minutes.

- Use tongs to remove the corn cobs and discard. Add the potatoes and simmer for 10 minutes or until they are three-quarters of the way cooked.

- Stir in the corn kernels, milk, and remaining salt. Simmer on low until the potatoes are fully cooked and the corn is tender, about 5 minutes. Turn off the heat. Taste the soup and add more salt and pepper as needed. Stir in the chives then serve.

- If you'd like a thicker chowder, blend two cups of the soup then stir it back into the pot.

- Whole ears of corn work best for this recipe. However, if you only have frozen corn, you can use 4 cups in the soup and skip the part of the recipe that uses the corn cobs.

