



# Corn with Pork Belly & Scallions

*Bắp và Thịt Ba Rọi*

Tucked into a small alley, the quaint, sparsely decorated home of Mr. Châu, whom we call “Captain Cook” (see Web site for story behind the name) hid one of the most vibrant kitchens in Vietnam. The Captain taught me how well corn, pork, and scallions go together. A short stop at the market left us armed with fatty pork, fresh corn, and spring onions. I balanced these treasures under my arms as I clung to the back of the Captain’s scooter, speeding through the crowded Nha-Trang side streets.

His daughter, Hà Triêu Quyên and visiting cousin *Phượng* helped as he whipped up an intriguing corn dish to eat with our crispy chicken wings and steamed fresh crabs. We sipped red wine while escaping the afternoon’s brutal sun, hidden away in our back-alley cove.

*Makes 4 to 6 servings as part of multi-dish meal*

- 1/2 lb. (227 g.) Pork belly or fatty pork shoulder (butt), small bite-size pieces, about 1/8 inch (0.3 cm.) thick
- 1/4 cup Water
- 2 lg. Scallions, chopped (When in season substitute spring onions)
- 2 cloves Garlic, minced
- 1 Thai bird chili, minced
- 2 cups Corn kernels
- 1/2 tsp. Granulated sugar
- pinch Ground black pepper
- 1 Tbsp. Fish sauce (*nước mắm*)

1. In a medium skillet or wok over medium heat, simmer pork and water, stirring often. Cook until water steams out and pork renders out about 1/4 cup of fat. It is okay for pork to brown slightly.
2. Add scallions, garlic, and chilies. Cook until aromatic, about 15 seconds. Add corn, sugar, pepper, and fish sauce. Cook, stirring constantly, until corn is tender.
3. Taste; adjust seasoning with fish sauce and sugar.





## How and Why

Adding water to the pork at the beginning helps it to render more fat, creating a more luxurious sauce. The water conducts heat more evenly than the direct heat of the pan, so more fat renders and becomes part of the sauce.

Opposite page top left: *Captain Cook is in command of his kitchen.*

Opposite page top right: *Hà Triều Quyên, blending a quick sauce.*

Opposite page bottom left: *Phuong's constant smiles in the kitchen are a delight.*

Opposite page bottom right: *We also steamed some live crabs with a lime-pepper dipping salt and fried chicken wings with chili sauce.*