

An “A-maize-ing” Snack Food

(NAPSA)—Once again, America pays homage to one of our most intriguing and beloved snack foods: popcorn. October, National Popcorn Poppin’ Month, is just one good time to celebrate the age-old seed that brings pleasure to millions around the world.

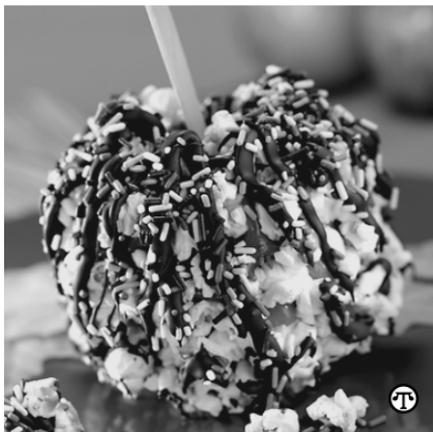
Popcorn is a type of maize—or corn—but differs from its country cousins, sweet and field corn. Popcorn has a thicker hull, which allows pressure from the heated water inside the kernel to build and eventually bursts open. The inside starch becomes gelatinous while being heated, spills out and cools when the hull bursts, giving popcorn its familiar shape. Of the different types of corn, only popcorn pops.

While the scientific principle behind popcorn makes it more fun to make, the real allure comes when you grab a handful of freshly popped popcorn. The smell, taste and texture satisfy the hungriest of appetites and keep you coming back for more. The fact that popcorn is a whole-grain food means you can come back for more without really worrying about your waistline.

You can celebrate October Poppin’ Month or anytime with your family and friends by trying new popcorn recipes. Visit www.popcorn.org for trivia, fun facts, tasty recipes and more.

Popcorn Caramel Apples

- 1 quart popped popcorn
- 1 (9.5 oz.) package caramels, unwrapped (35 caramels)
- ¼ cup light cream or “half and half”
- 4 lollipop sticks (or wooden candy apple sticks)
- 4 apples



½ cup chocolate chips
Sugar sprinkles

- Place popcorn in a large bowl; set aside. Place a sheet of waxed paper on work surface.

- Heat caramels and cream in a small sauce pan over medium-low heat. Stir frequently until caramels are melted and cream is blended into caramels.

- Push a stick into an apple center and dip into caramel. Spoon caramel over apple to coat completely. Place caramel-coated apple into bowl of popcorn and press popcorn onto caramel to cover completely. Place apple on waxed paper to set; repeat with remaining apples.

- Place chocolate chips in a small, resealable plastic bag. Microwave 10 seconds and press chips to aid melting. Repeat, heating at 10-second intervals, until chips are completely melted. Cut a small corner off bag and squeeze chocolate onto each apple, allowing chocolate to drip down sides. Sprinkle with sugar sprinkles.

- To serve, cut apple into slices.