

Delightful Food Ideas

Celebrate Popcorn

(NAPSA)—Popcorn, enjoyed every day but celebrated in October during National Popcorn Poppin' Month, existed long before today's dizzying array of snacks, tracing its roots back thousands of years. Yet, throughout the ages, this enduring fan favorite has remained relatively unchanged. Popcorn kernels are the seeds of a large-grain plant also known as maize. Once the kernels are stripped from the cob and dried to 14 percent moisture, they can be popped and eaten.

This seed-to-snack simplicity is just part of the allure. Whole grain, naturally low in fat and calories, and gluten free, popcorn is a good fit for today's health-conscious consumer. Yet it's the taste and versatility that continue to make this one popular snack food. Americans consume some 16 billion quarts of popcorn each year. That's roughly 51 quarts per man, woman and child.

Add in popcorn's irresistible aroma, connection to good times, seemingly magical transformation and the fact that it strikes a chord with the budget minded, and it's easy to understand why there's a monthlong celebration for this American icon every October.

You can join in the fun by making this autumnal treat, from a recipe by The Popcorn Board.

Down Home Apple Pie Popcorn

A timely fall treat, combining luscious flavors of the harvest.

Yield: 10 cups

Ingredients:

3 Tbsp melted butter
1 tsp vanilla extract



Apple Pie Popcorn is a superb snack that's easy to make.

2 Tbsp brown sugar
1 tsp ground cinnamon
¼ tsp ground allspice
¼ tsp ground nutmeg
8 cups popped popcorn
1 cup dried apple chips,
broken into large pieces
¼ cup toffee bits

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 300° F. Whisk melted butter with vanilla. Toss brown sugar with cinnamon, allspice and nutmeg.

2. Toss popcorn with butter mixture. Sprinkle evenly with brown sugar mixture. Stir. Transfer to baking sheet lined with parchment paper.

3. Sprinkle apple chips and toffee bits over top. Bake for 15 minutes or until toffee bits start to melt. Cool before serving.

Tip: Add chopped pecans for extra crunch.

Learn why popcorn pops, the history of popcorn, corny facts, recipes and more at www.popcorn.org.

Editor's Note: While October is National Popcorn Poppin' Month, this article can be useful to your readers at any time.