

Holiday Hints

Deck The Halls With Popcorn Trees

(NAPSA)—'Tis the season of decking halls and trimming trees, and now there's a delicious way to do both—in the kitchen.

There's no chance of breaking heirloom ornaments when you're decorating miniature Festive Popcorn Trees made from The Popcorn Board's recipe. Roll up your sleeves, gather the kids and pull out your prettiest decorating sugars and sprinkles. Then turn marshmallows and popcorn into a scenic winter wonderland to display—or eat.

Long ago, Christmas trees were trimmed with treats such as apples, nuts or dates. With Festive Popcorn Trees, your entire tree is edible. There's no right or wrong way to decorate a tree, but if you're not happy with the results, eat it and start again. It's the ultimate eco-friendly way to trim a tree.

And if you're looking to trim fat and calories during this hectic season, pop up a bowl of plain popcorn to nibble on when hunger strikes. At 30 calories a cup, wholesome, whole grain popcorn is naturally low in fat and calories and the fiber can help fill you between meals. Leave the padding to jolly old St. Nick.

Festive Popcorn Trees

Yield: 10 trees

- 10 cups air-popped popcorn***
- 1 10-ounce bag miniature marshmallows**
- 2 tablespoons butter**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- decorating sugar (green, blue)****
- 1 tube of white frosting (with decorating tip)**
- assorted small colorful candies, such as sprinkles and miniature silver dragées**

Place popcorn in large bowl. Place marshmallows and butter in medium saucepan over



Tiny trees made of popcorn are in good taste for the holidays.

medium-low heat. Stir until marshmallows are melted and mixture is smooth. Remove from heat. Stir in vanilla extract. Pour mixture over popcorn in bowl. Toss well to coat popcorn evenly. Line a baking sheet with foil. Spray hands with nonstick cooking spray, then scoop up about 1 cup of popcorn mixture. Shape mixture into a cone shape, keeping the base flat. This forms the tree. Sprinkle tree with decorating sugar; place tree on baking sheet. Continue to make the rest of the trees. Pipe frosting on trees to make a garland, then decorate them with colorful candies.

Serving suggestion: Place each tree on a sugar cookie and decorate your serving tray with shredded coconut to resemble snow.

Notes:

***It's important that this recipe starts with unflavored white popcorn for best color and flavor.**

****You can make your own colored sugar by adding food coloring to sugar, stirring in a bowl or shaking vigorously in a sealed container. Add more food coloring for more intense tones.**

For more information, visit www.popcorn.org.