

Popcorn Palooza: Elevate your snacking game with DIY gourmet flavors

Written by Gallupsun Staff
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Check the date! National Popcorn Day falls on Jan. 19, a celebration of America's favorite frugal and fabulous snack! Popcorn isn't just a guilt-free treat; it's a canvas for culinary creativity. Forget the store-bought microwave versions. I've got the scoop on making your popcorn gourmet.

Popcorn is so easy to make. A healthier alternative to packaged processed microwave popcorn is to use an air popper or make popcorn on the stove, with a clever twist from my mom's playbook.

MOM'S PERFECT POPCORN

Rule of thumb: Each third of a cup of kernels yields approximately 8 cups of popped corn.

Yield: 16 cups

Time: 10 minutes

4 tablespoons of oil - vegetable oil, olive oil, peanut oil, ghee or coconut oil 2/3 cup popcorn kernels

In a medium saucepan, on medium heat, warm 4 tablespoons of oil. My current favorite oil to use is coconut oil for the subtle sweetness it brings. Add four popcorn kernels. When they pop, the oil is hot. Add 2/3 cup kernels to the pan and cover.

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Here's where my mom got clever; remove the pan from the heat for 1 minute to let all the kernels warm up evenly. Then place the pan back on the heat and let the popcorn cook until it's all popped. Hardly any old maids!

To kick off the festivities, here are 10 DIY gourmet flavored popcorns that turn this humble snack into a symphony of flavors. Let the popping begin! All these recipes use 16 cups of freshly popped popcorn.

Ranch: Melt half a stick of butter with 1 tablespoon nutritional yeast, 2 teaspoons dried dill weed, 2 teaspoons dried parsley, 2 teaspoons onion powder, 2 teaspoons garlic powder, 1 teaspoon lemon pepper and 1/8 teaspoon salt.

Mediterranean: Toss popcorn with 3 tablespoons olive oil, 1/2 cup grated Parmesan, 1 tablespoon Italian seasoning, 1 teaspoon garlic powder and 2 teaspoons kosher salt.

Green Goddess: Melt 6 tablespoons of butter with 1 teaspoon minced dried onion, 1 teaspoon granulated garlic and 1 tablespoon mixed dried green herbs such as parsley, chives, basil, green onion and tarragon, and 2 teaspoons kosher salt.

Honey Mustard Pretzel: Blend 4 tablespoons melted butter with 2 tablespoons brown deli or Dijon mustard, 1 tablespoon honey and 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt. Drizzle over popcorn and toss with 4 cups mini pretzels.

Chesapeake Bay: Melt 4 tablespoons butter with 2 teaspoons Old Bay Seasoning. Drizzle over popcorn and mix with 4 cups oyster crackers.

Sriracha with Lime: Blend 4 tablespoons melted butter with 1/4 cup Sriracha, 1 tablespoon lime juice, 1 1/2 teaspoons grated lime zest and 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt. Drizzle over popcorn and toss.

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Buffalo Blue: Melt 6 tablespoons butter with 1/3 cup Buffalo hot sauce. Toss with popcorn, sprinkle with 1/2 cup crumbled blue cheese and 1/2 teaspoon celery salt.

Tropical: Melt 4 tablespoons butter with 3 tablespoons powdered sugar. Toss with hot popcorn and add a (10 ounce) package of dried tropical fruit mix. Season with salt.

Cinnamon Toast: Melt 6 tablespoons butter, drizzle over popcorn. Mix together 1/3 cup sugar, 2 teaspoons cinnamon and 1 teaspoon kosher salt. Toss with popcorn and add 4 cups of your favorite cinnamon cereal.

S'mores Popcorn: Toss popcorn with 4 tablespoons melted butter. Place popcorn on a large parchment-covered baking sheet. Sprinkle 2 cups mini marshmallows, 2 cups crumbled graham crackers and 2 cups chocolate chips over popcorn, and bake at 300 F for 5 minutes. Toss to coat.

At mere pennies per serving, if there ever was a frugal and fabulous snack, this would be it! Whether it's movie night, game night, after-school snack or you just want some crunch with your lunch, celebrate Popcorn Day with a POP!

Lifestyle expert Patti Diamond is the penny-pinching, party-planning, recipe developer and content creator of the website Divas On A Dime -- Where Frugal, Meets Fabulous! Visit Patti at www.divasonadime.com and join the conversation on Facebook at Divas OnADimeDotCom. Email Patti at divapatti@divasonadime.com

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