



**THE
GREEN
GOURMET**



30 Perfect Popcorn Recipes



How To Make Sweet & Savory Gourmet Popcorn At Home

Lori Jane Stewart

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Introduction



Popcorn has probably been around longer than any other snack food on the planet. It has a rich history, dating back to before civilization and taking part in a multitude of events we celebrate every year. It's the most popular snack food around the world, and the second most popular snack in America (falling just behind potato chips). Popcorn can be found all over the country, at movie theaters, carnivals, and most people's kitchens or pantries.

It is a common misconception that popcorn is an unhealthy snack. The reason some people avoid popcorn is because they don't understand the real culprit! Behind its supposedly unhealthy status, are the seasonings and additives, often added to commercially packaged products to liven up the bland natural flavor and to lengthen its shelf life. The popcorn itself is a wholegrain, and these can help prevent cancer and lower the risk of heart disease, while also supplying healthy nutrients that support our vision.

There are many different methods to create popcorn, but the basic principle stays the same. All you have to do is make the kernels hot enough to heat the moisture contained naturally inside, and turn that into steam. The steam creates pressure from inside the hard shell casing and before you know it, POP! - the kernel is turned inside out and is ready to be consumed. As long as you can generate heat and have some kernels on hand, you can make popcorn!

Enough of the history, what about the recipes? I've gathered 30 of the finest

popcorn recipes from around the world for your snacking pleasure, and have tried to keep them free from artificial sweeteners, preservatives or other nasty additives wherever possible. I've specified 9 cups of popped corn for most recipes, as that gives 3 generous cups per serving - you can have as many or as few servings as you fancy, but keep an eye on the calories! For your convenience, I've also included nutritional data from the USDA for each recipe - that's the [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#) and not the [United Square Dancers of America](#)!

My preference for both flavor and health reasons, is freshly air-popped popcorn - so I have used that kind for all of these recipes. Everything in this book can be made with kernels you have freshly popped, or if you are in a hurry (or feeling lazy!), then you can always use the plain store bought pre-popped variety - just make sure you check the packaging for artificial nasties!

Most of the ingredients for these recipes can be found at your local grocery store or deli, but if you get stuck, then the slightly more unusual ones can also be bought online via this special page on my website - <http://www.greengourmetbooks.com/perfect-popcorn-recipes-buy-the-harder-to-find-ingredients-online/> or <http://bit.ly/popcornlist>

Enjoy preparing and sharing!



P.S. - If 30 recipes isn't quite enough for you, then check the back of the book to find out how to get another 12, absolutely free!

Popcorn and Health



We live in a health conscious society with dietary obsessions intensifying each and every day. It sometimes feels like there are more diet programs, health “facts” and fat loss solutions than there are people in the world! Unfortunately, many of us are happy to accept any quick weight loss scam that comes along, often without doing any background research. And then we wonder why we have gained five pounds in five days - instead of losing the twenty pounds the new fad diet promised! You could write books longer than encyclopedia collections, just on all the common health misconceptions blasted at us on TV, in magazines and the good old, ever reliable internet, every day! We are going to ignore all of those, and instead focus on a food item that we encounter many times a year - and as you might have guessed, that’s going to be popcorn!

Popcorn is the second most popular snack consumed by Americans; the first being potato chips. It is consumed in droves every day at movie theaters, amusement parks, carnivals, and thousands of homes. There are hundreds of different varieties of popcorn - salted, buttered, cinnamon glazed, and candy coated are just a few of the most common varieties that you can find on any grocery store’s shelves. There has to be at least one flavor or popcorn variation available that for everyone will enjoy. But just how healthy is popcorn?

Before we pull out all the big chemistry words that you’re going to take note of and forget in the next twenty minutes, let’s take a look at this from a commonsense point of view. More than **three million** bags of microwave popcorn are sold each and every year in America, a country well known for having a large overweight and otherwise unhealthy population. If popcorn is the second most popular snack in a country full of

overweight people, then it would be reasonable to assume that popcorn is fattening - right?

WRONG!

This is the exact same argument that is used by some people to condemn just about everything, other than tofu and vegan cheese. It is what many of us think when we deny ourselves a simple bag of popcorn, on the rare occasion we manage to see a movie at the theater. Moderation in most things is good, but a lot of the misconceptions about health and diet have caused millions of people to miss out on treats like popcorn, for no good reason whatsoever.

Plain air popped popcorn is healthy!

That's right, I said it, and I'm not taking it back either! Popcorn is a wholegrain. It's essentially just a heated up seed. Each kernel, by itself, contains very few calories or carbohydrates. It does not make you fat, and has little to do with the creation of fat in your body. Wholegrains are the healthiest grains you can consume, and have been linked to reducing the risk of diabetes and heart disease.

Let's get into the chemical aspects for a second. Popcorn has a large amount of polyphenols, an antioxidant that has been found to prevent cancer and reduce the risk of heart disease. Popcorn is also high in lutein and zeaxanthin, two chemicals commonly found in fruits and vegetables, that promote healthy vision and are known to reduce your risk of cataracts.

So, that means we can eat all the popcorn we want without consequence - right? While theoretically that may be correct, realistically it is a terrible idea. Plain popcorn is a simple wholegrain that you can snack on, worry-free. Unfortunately, popcorn by itself is pretty bland and boring. Adding salt, butter, and other ingredients is what gives popcorn it's appealing flavor, and it's these extras that are often bad for your health. By loading your popcorn down with butter, you're effectively making all its healthy properties insignificant.

Boring, plain and healthy in reasonable quantities, or exciting, delicious in smaller quantities - it's up to you!

To make the decision easier, I have made sure that all the recipes in this book have the nutritional information listed, calculated from the ingredients. So you can see at a glance which are most suited to your dietary requirements. The percent daily values are based on the Reference Daily Intake (RDI) for a 2000 calorie diet.

The History & Popularity of Popcorn



Popcorn is one of the most common snacks eaten throughout the world. In the United States, it is the second most popular snack, just behind potato chips. Most of us have had popcorn at one point in time and have our own opinions on the timeless and cultureless snack, which has been revamped and reinvented countless times over its history.

Just how old is popcorn?

Archaeologists have found evidence that way back in eighty BC cavemen were eating maize, whose kernels could be heated up to create popcorn. There isn't sufficient evidence as to whether or not early man created and consumed popcorn, but chances are that the kernels got too close to a fire every now and then and gave the cave men a surprise of their life! The earliest evidence of popcorn as we know it, actually being created was in New Mexico around thirty-six hundred BC.

Fast forward a few thousand years, to the English discovering popcorn after Columbus sailed to America and learned the secret of popping kernels from the Native Americans. Around the same time, Hernando Cortes was learning about the same secret from the Aztecs in Mexico, where popcorn was revered as an important food source and also for its use in ceremonial decorations.

Popcorn was brought by the Native Americans to the first Thanksgiving. Back then, it wasn't eaten like it is today. Instead of separating the kernels from the ear of corn and eating each separately, they would douse the ear in oil and hold it over a fire. Then, after the kernels had popped, they would eat the popcorn from the cob, just as

most people eat an ear of corn today. Native Americans would also use popcorn for brewing beer and in soup. The first colonists began using popcorn as a cereal, serving it with milk or cream inside a bowl.

Charles Cretors is the man who created the first popcorn machine on December 2nd, 1885. It all started when he decided to purchase a peanut roaster for his confectionary shop. He wasn't very pleased with the machine's efficiency, so he decided to upgrade the machine by placing a small steam engine inside it! This automated the entire process of roasting peanuts. A traveling salesman named J. M. Savage happened across Cretors' store one day and was amazed when he saw the new machine. He offered to sell the machine to store owners in his sales territory, and Cretors agreed. It wasn't long before he had great success selling his machine and moved to Chicago, where he began to try selling the machine outside of his own shop. While putting it on display, he decided to test the machine's limits by roasting more than just peanuts. He soon found that the machine could also pop corn efficiently and modified his machine to roast peanuts and pop corn at the same time.

If you have an electric popcorn machine at home, it is most likely a hot air machine. This type of home machine was not widely available until 1978, when Presto came out with the [Popcorn Pumper](#). Hot air machines have revolutionized popcorn forever because they don't require oil, which reduces the amount of calories and fat created during the process of popping corn. Hot air machines are also a much faster alternative to popping corn in a frying pan and are much less messy than the Cretors popcorn machine!

Home hot air machines didn't become as popular as they could have been, due to the arrival in the mid 1970s of microwave popcorn. Microwave popcorn completely eliminated the need for a dedicated popcorn machine and allows people to make servings of popcorn quickly without having to measure out the amount of kernels. Microwave popcorn is created much faster than any other method of creating popcorn, but it is also healthier, deriving more than sixty percent of its calories from fat.

Ways of Cooking Popcorn



Popcorn has been enjoyed by billions of people over the millennia. Many different methods of popping corn have been discovered, but we didn't really know just why popcorn popped, until few centuries back. It's a timeless treat that you can eat or craft with and enjoy, nearly anywhere at any time - if you know just how to pop the kernels.

The key ingredient used to kernel popping is natural occurring water. There is a small amount inside each kernel, surrounded by soft starch, encased in a hard outer shell that is very difficult to crack open manually. This is made much easier when you heat the kernel up - usually to about four hundred and fifty degrees Fahrenheit! At that temperature, the water inside the kernel turns to steam and creates pressure. This pressure builds until the hard shell of the kernel explodes and the kernel is turned inside out.

The force exerted when a kernel explodes causes it to go all over the place. To keep popcorn from spilling all around your kitchen floor or the ground of your campsite, you have to make sure the kernels are covered. Most methods of creating popcorn cover the kernels or direct their flow in a way that prevents any from being wasted. Now that you know how the process works, let's take a look at some of the different popcorn creation methods.

The first method we are going to discuss is also the oldest - the open fire. Popcorn is a great snack that can be easily made over a campfire. All you need are kernels, a pot, pan, or other cooking device with a long handle, and a way to cover the cooking device you decide to use. Put the cooking container on the fire, make sure it is sitting

above the flames, throw the kernels into the container and then cover the top. You should hear the kernels popping after a few minutes and will know it is safe to remove the cover and start eating once the popping has ceased.

The next most common method is the stove top. As civilization and technology progressed, fewer people were living the nomadic lifestyle and sleeping outdoors. The stove replaced the campfire and that made many recipes obsolete, however the recipe for popcorn hasn't changed much from the campfire setting. All you have to do is put the kernels inside a pan, cover the pan, heat it, and wait for the popping to start and stop. But it is easier to take things a couple steps further when cooking on a stove. Coating the bottom of the pan in cooking oil will give the popcorn a little added flavor. You can also easily melt some butter in the pan, and add whatever seasonings you have on hand. If you want things to be really easy, you can buy prepackaged stove-top popcorn kits that work by simply turning the stove on and sitting the package onto the burner for a specified period of time.

And now we have finally arrived to the most common method used for making popcorn today - microwaved and popcorn machines! Essentially the same principals - throw the popcorn in, wait, extract, and eat. The only difference between a popcorn machine and microwavable popcorn, is that the latter is prepackaged, like the machine equivalent to the stove-top kit. The only problem with prepackaged popcorn is that it generally comes with artificial flavoring, seasoning and additives, which doesn't leave much room for experimentation. Home popcorn machines simply require you to measure out the amount of kernels you want, easily and safely pop them and then allow you to add the seasonings and flavorings of your choice. And that is exactly what we will be doing in this book.

Sweet Popcorn Recipes

Almost Lemon Meringue Popcorn

1/2 cup water
1 cup light corn syrup
2 tbsp lemon zest, freshly grated
1 tbsp lemon juice, freshly squeezed
1/2 cup sugar, granulated
1/4 tsp sea salt
9 cups popcorn, air-popped
1 cup miniature marshmallows
1 tsp sugar, powdered

1. Pour water and corn syrup into small pan over a low heat.
2. Add lemon zest, lemon juice, granulated sugar and salt.
3. Stir continuously until sugar is dissolved.
4. Place the popcorn into a large bowl.
5. Pour liquid over the popcorn and stir well.
6. Spread over waxed paper or onto a non-stick baking sheet, and allow to cool.
7. Pour into a serving bowl, and mix in marshmallows.
8. Dust with powdered sugar and serve.

Servings: 4

Cooking Times

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Inactive Time: 20 minutes

Total Time: 45 minutes

Nutrition Facts

Serving size: 1/4 of a recipe (8.4 ounces).

Amount Per Serving

Calories 474.02

Calories From Fat (2%) 10.77

% Daily Value

Total Fat 1.26g 2%

Saturated Fat 0.14g <1%

Cholesterol 0mg 0%

Sodium 1433.26mg 60%

Potassium 129.16mg 4%

Total Carbohydrates 121.93g 41%

Fiber 3.21g 13%

Sugar 58.74g

Protein 2.9g 6%

Percent daily values based on the Reference Daily Intake (RDI) for a 2000 calorie diet.

Baked White Chocolate Popcorn

9 cups popcorn, air-popped
1/2 cup butter, unsalted
1/3 cup brown sugar, packed
1/4 tsp light corn syrup
1/2 tsp sea salt
1/4 tsp baking soda
1 tsp vanilla extract
4 ounces white chocolate chips
cooking spray (as needed)

1. Preheat the oven to 300° F.
2. Lightly coat the sides of a large roasting pan with cooking spray, then add the popcorn.
3. In a small thick bottomed pan over a low heat, melt the butter over a low heat.
4. Add the brown sugar, corn syrup and salt to the pan, then slowly bring the mixture to the boil, stirring constantly
5. Reduce the heat, and simmer for a further 1-2 minutes.
6. Remove pan from heat, then add baking soda and vanilla extract, stirring well.
7. Drizzle this mixture over the popcorn and shake the roasting pan well, ensuring even coverage.
8. Bake the popcorn for 30 minutes, stirring every 10 minutes.
9. Remove popcorn mixture from the oven and sprinkle with chocolate chips.
10. Allow chocolate chips to melt and mixture to cool completely before serving.

Servings: 4

Oven Temperature: 300°F

Cooking Times

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Cooking Time: 30 minutes

Inactive Time: 15 minutes

Total Time: 1 hour

Nutrition Facts

Serving size: 1/4 of a recipe (3.5 ounces).

Amount Per Serving

Calories 491.72

Calories From Fat (57%) 279.79

% Daily Value

Total Fat 32.6g 50%

Saturated Fat 19.67g 98%

Cholesterol 61.01mg 20%

Sodium 2825.82mg 118%

Potassium 195.42mg 6%

Total Carbohydrates 51.63g 17%

Fiber 4.46g 18%

Sugar 18.19g

Protein 3.96g 8%

Percent daily values based on the Reference Daily Intake (RDI) for a 2000 calorie diet.

Beautiful Butterscotch Popcorn Squares

1/3 cup butter, unsalted
1/2 cup light corn syrup
4 ounces butterscotch chips
1/2 cup peanut butter, crunchy
9 cups popcorn, air-popped

1. Add butter and corn syrup to small pan on a low heat.
2. When butter has melted, gradually add butterscotch chips, stirring continuously.
3. Finally add peanut butter, and keep stirring until melted.
4. Place popcorn in large mixing bowl.
5. Pour mixture over popcorn and stir to cover evenly.
6. Press combined mixture into a non-stick baking dish, and chill for at least an hour.
7. Cut into squares and serve.

Servings: 5

Cooking Times

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Inactive Time: 1 hour

Total Time: 1 hour and 25 minutes

Nutrition Facts

Serving size: 1/5 of a recipe (4 ounces).

Amount Per Serving

Calories 501.92

Calories From Fat (46%) 229.46

% Daily Value

Total Fat 26.78g 41%

Saturated Fat 10.81g 54%

Cholesterol 34.55mg 12%

Sodium 152.13mg 6%

Potassium 218.79mg 6%

Total Carbohydrates 64.07g 21%

Fiber 3.64g 15%

Sugar 11.64g

Protein 8.49g 17%

Percent daily values based on the Reference Daily Intake (RDI) for a 2000 calorie diet.