

# Affection's Confection

Chocolate is a confection wrapped in emotion. It is given with warmth and eaten with pleasure. It is a treat that is slowly savored and selfishly guarded. From a first birthday cake and checkout lane candies, thru courting ritual tokens and celebratory desserts, chocolate is always regarded with great affection. Chocolate tacitly says, "You're special."

If you're looking for a simple way to spoil someone you're sweet on, make this recipe for Nutty Chocolate Caramel Corn Clusters from the Popcorn Board. Try marcona almonds in this chocolaty, crunchy treat for a flavorful change from traditional chocolate caramel corn.

**Did you know:** Chocolate and popcorn share the same cultural background. Both originated in South and Central America and were celebrated by the Aztecs and Mayans.

**Did you know:** Chocolate and popcorn contain polyphenols. Polyphenols appear to lower the risk of heart disease and some cancers.

**Did you know:** Popcorn is a whole grain. Consuming at least 3 or more ounce equivalents of whole grains per day can reduce the risk of several chronic diseases and may help with weight maintenance.

## Nutty Chocolate Caramel Corn Clusters

No need for a candy thermometer to make this delicious treat.

*Makes: 3 quarts, 24 servings, 1/2 cup per serving*

*Preparation time: 15 minutes*

*Baking time: 40 minutes*

- 3 quarts popped popcorn
- 1 cup marcona almonds, whole almonds or peanuts
- 1 (12 oz) package semisweet chocolate morsels
- 1 cup light corn syrup
- 1/4 cup (1/2 stick) butter or margarine

- Preheat oven to 300 degrees F. Line a large, rimmed baking pan (17 x 12-inches) with foil and spray lightly with cooking spray.
- Spray a large mixing bowl (not plastic) with cooking spray and add popcorn and nuts; set aside.
- In a medium saucepan, combine chocolate morsels, corn syrup and butter. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until mixture boils. Pour over popcorn; toss well to coat.
- Spread in an even layer into prepared baking pan. Bake in preheated oven 40 minutes, stirring every 10 minutes. Cool completely in pan. Break into pieces; store in an airtight container.

Clean-up tip: Soak saucepan before cleaning.

