

DRIVE-IN DELIGHTS



Create Your Own Backyard Theater

Growing up in the 70s, one of the most magical experiences of summer was a night at the drive-in. The drive-in was a wholesome, communal venue where friends and families gathered, unhurried, unhindered under the warm nighttime sky. Lying back on the hood of the family sedan, movie speakers crackling, popcorn in hand, hanging out at the drive-in was a festive occasion.

Sadly, the drive-in theater is a rarity now. Sure, kids nowadays get to watch movies *while* parents drive, but it's generally a solitary experience meant to keep kids entertained during a road trip. If you're lucky enough to live near one of the few remaining drive-in theaters today, you owe it to yourself to go. For the rest of us, a little creativity is called for.

You can recreate the experience by hosting a movie night in your backyard. Projectors are available to rent for \$100 or less, which might be a splurge but oh-so worth it for a special summer celebration. Invite friends and neighbors over to watch a favorite flick on the big screen. Just secure a white sheet to a clothesline, toss blankets on the ground or arrange some comfortable chairs, make up a big batch of popcorn and press "play." Projectors plug easily into your computer or DVD player and come with simple directions to help you with the set up.

No movie experience is complete without popcorn. Pop up a batch and set up a toppings station. Fill individual containers with popcorn and set out various herbs, spices, season mixes, Parmesan cheese and more. Try this Sweet and Spicy Seasoning Mix courtesy of the Popcorn Board (www.popcorn.org).



Sweet and Spicy Popcorn Seasoning Mix

Makes: about 4 tablespoons seasoning mix

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon ancho chili powder
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1/4 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne
- 4 quarts popped popcorn
- Cooking spray (helps seasoning adhere to popcorn)

Directions:

1. Stir spices together in a small bowl.
2. Place popcorn in a serving bowl and spray lightly with cooking spray.
3. Sprinkle about 2 teaspoons (or to taste) of the mix over popcorn and toss to distribute evenly. Store leftover seasoning mix in an airtight container for future use.