



The Flavors of FRANCE

Last year's award winning *Les Misérables*, reminded us why we love France. There is magical, mythical Paris--"the city of love"--but our affection for France extends to their countless contributions to art, history, fashion, architecture, iconic monuments (the Eiffel Tower and our own Statue of Liberty--a gift from the French) and of course, food.

Haute cuisine is classical French cuisine, known for meats and stews, heavy sauces, flour, and butter while nouvelle cuisine offers healthier, vibrant and more innovative ingredients. Cities across the globe boast brasseries and restaurants with a take on French cuisine. Also revered are the ever-present pâtisseries. Found throughout France, these shops are beautifully decorated and filled with a stunning array of desserts and sweets. Chefs come from around the world for lengthy training in the fine art of pastry making.

If you're looking for a quick taste of France without jetting off to Páree, try this simple yet superb recipe for Lavender Provençal Popcorn.

Lavender Provençal Popcorn

Ingredients:

- 2 quarts popped popcorn
- 1 tablespoon butter, melted
- 2 teaspoons Herbs de Provence (with lavender)
- 1/2 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

Directions:

Place popcorn in a large bowl and drizzle with melted butter; toss. Evenly sprinkle Herbs de Provence, garlic and salt over popcorn; toss again and serve.

Note: For fewer calories, omit butter. Spray popcorn lightly with cooking spray. Evenly sprinkle Herbs de Provence, garlic and salt over popcorn; toss again and serve.

On the sweeter side: A popular mainstay in French cuisine, the macaron, takes a turn in this recipe for Peanut Butter and Chocolate Hazelnut Popcorn Macaron. Magnifique!



Peanut Butter and Chocolate Hazelnut Popcorn Macaron

Makes: about 18 cookies (1 1/2 inches)

Ingredients:

- 6 cups popped popcorn, unpopped kernels removed
- 3 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 1/2 cup peanut butter
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon (optional)
- 4 cups mini marshmallows (or 40 regular)
- 1/2 cup chocolate hazelnut spread

Directions:

1. Place popcorn in a large bowl; set aside.
2. Melt butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Stir in peanut butter and cinnamon (if desired) until butter is melted and mixture is blended. Stir marshmallows into mixture until melted and well blended.
3. Pour over popcorn and stir until evenly coated. With buttered hands, shape popcorn into about 18 small popcorn balls (1 1/2 inches); place onto parchment lined baking sheet.
4. Flatten each ball slightly. With a serrated bread knife, carefully cut each cookie in half horizontally. Spoon about 1 teaspoon of hazelnut spread onto cut side of one half. Top with 2nd half; repeat with remaining popcorn balls.
5. Serve immediately or store in an airtight container.