

In with the Old...

## and In with the New



**S**ugar plums & candy canes. Latkes and Applesauce. Roast Beef & Yorkshire Pudding. The holiday season is chockfull of the familiar flavors of tried and true food pairings. This year, why not add something new, but equally scrumptious, to your yuletide repertoire? Consider Gingerbread Popcorn: its spiced aroma will instantly fill your home with Christmas cheer while you deck your halls or trim your tree. The whole-grain goodness of fresh popcorn pairs with fragrant ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves for a healthful and delicious snack. Or, for a special holiday event, try fun and fanciful Crème Brûlée with Caramel Popcorn. This spectacular make-ahead dessert packs a “wow” factor that will impress your guests with its unusual pairing of creamy custard and crunchy caramelized popcorn. Yum!

### Gingerbread Popcorn Snack Mix

Enjoy the flavors of traditional gingerbread, without the calories and with whole-grain goodness to boot.

2 quarts popped popcorn  
 Butter flavored cooking spray  
 1/3 cup granulated sugar substitute  
 2 teaspoon ground ginger  
 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground nutmeg  
 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon  
 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves  
 1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black or white pepper

Preheat oven to 325° F. Spread popcorn on baking sheet and spray lightly with the cooking spray. Combine remaining ingredients in a small bowl and sprinkle evenly over popcorn. Spray again with cooking spray and toss to coat evenly. Bake 7 minutes and serve warm.

*Yield: 2 quarts*

### Crème Brûlée with Caramel Popcorn

Pop the bubbly (and the corn!) while you ring in the New Year with this delectable dessert.

#### For the Crème Brûlée:

2 cups heavy or whipping cream  
 1 cup milk  
 1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise  
 1/3 cup sugar  
 6 egg yolks  
 1/2 cup light brown or raw sugar

- Preheat oven to 300° F. In a medium saucepan, heat cream, milk and vanilla bean just until mixture begins to simmer. Remove from heat and let steep 15 minutes.
- In a medium bowl, whisk together sugar and egg yolks until mixture lightens in color and thickens, about 2 minutes. Whisk egg mixture into cream mixture and strain into a clean bowl.
- Pour mixture into 6 shallow baking dishes (each about 3/4 cup capacity). Place dishes in a roasting pan and pour enough hot water to reach halfway up sides of baking dishes.

- Bake 30 minutes or until mixture is just set in center. Allow dishes to cool completely; cover and refrigerate 2 to 24 hours.
- At serving time, sprinkle brown sugar in a thin layer over each dish. Heat under a preheated broiler 1 minute or until sugar is caramelized. (Alternatively, caramelize the sugar with a kitchen propane torch). Serve with Caramel Popcorn sprinkled over top.

#### For the Caramel Popcorn:

1/2 cup sugar  
 1 tablespoon light or dark corn syrup  
 2 tablespoons water  
 2 tablespoons butter  
 1/2 teaspoon salt  
 3 cups popped popcorn  
 1/4 cup chopped peanuts

- Line a large baking sheet with lightly buttered foil. In a medium saucepan, combine sugar, corn syrup and water and bring to a boil. Cook the syrup over medium heat, without stirring, until it becomes amber in color; about 6 minutes.
- Remove from heat and stir in butter and salt until blended. Stir in popcorn and peanuts until coated. Spread the caramel corn in a single layer onto buttered foil. Allow to cool before breaking into pieces. Store in an airtight container until serving time.

*Yield: 6 Servings*