



# Special People, Special Times

We appreciate holidays that remind us to tell our mothers and fathers how much they mean to us. They have, after all, devoted countless hours to raising and nurturing us, and standing by us at our most disagreeable times. But you don't need a dedicated holiday to do something special for those who have helped shape your life.

Celebrate the good times you've shared through the years with a simple evening get together. Of all the events that families go through – little league games, school plays, graduations, and other milestones – what we might remember the most is the comfort we feel when we are at home, gathered around the family table with some of our favorite home-cooked foods in front of us.

Why not show Mom or Dad how much you cherish these family moments by creating a few items out of everyone's favorite snack – popcorn! The following recipes evoke the 'around the table' feeling with a modern twist.



## Popcorn Crusted Macaroni and Cheese

*Yield: 4 servings*

- 8 ounces elbow macaroni
- 4 tablespoons butter, divided
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1 1/2 cups milk
- 1-8 oz. (2 cups) package shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- 5 cups popped popcorn
- 1/2 teaspoon parsley flakes

- Preheat oven to 350° F. Butter an 8x8-inch baking pan with 1 tablespoon butter; set aside. Cook and drain macaroni according to package directions; set aside.
- Melt 2 tablespoons butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Whisk in flour, mustard, salt and pepper; cook 2 minutes, stirring frequently. Whisk in milk and cook, stirring frequently, until mixture thickens; about 10 minutes.
- Stir in cheese until cheese is melted and sauce is smooth. Stir macaroni into sauce; pour macaroni mixture into prepared pan.
- Melt remaining tablespoon of butter and toss with popcorn and parsley flakes. Spread popcorn over macaroni and bake 10 minutes.

After dinner, be sure to serve up the ultimate in comfort nostalgia – cookies and milk. These oatmeal cookies combine popcorn, nutritious grains and a power-packed punch to help you feel re-energized and ready to spend the evening playing board games.

## Power Packed Popcorn Cookies

*Yield: 4 dozen cookies*

- 1/4 cup whole wheat or all-purpose flour
  - 2 teaspoons baking powder
  - 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
  - 1/2 teaspoon salt
  - 1 stick (1/2 cup) butter, softened
  - 1 cup brown sugar, firmly packed
  - 1 egg
  - 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
  - 1 cup toasted wheat germ
  - 1/2 cup oatmeal
  - 1/2 cup flaked coconut
  - 3 cups popped popcorn
  - 1 cup raisins, dried cranberries or other dried fruit, chopped
  - 1/2 cup sunflower seeds or chopped nuts, optional
- Preheat oven to 350° F. Lightly spray baking sheets with cooking spray and set aside. In a small bowl, stir together flour, baking powder, soda and salt; set aside.
  - Cream butter and sugar together and add egg and vanilla; mix well. Stir in flour mixture and wheat germ and oatmeal until well blended. Add coconut, popcorn, raisins and sunflower seeds, if desired, and mix until well blended.
  - Drop by rounded teaspoons onto baking sheet, allowing 2 inches between cookies to allow for spreading. Bake 7–8 minutes or until edges are lightly browned. Allow cookies to cool on pan 5 minutes before removing to racks to cool completely.