

STAR-SPANGLED SNACKING



The excitement of a July 4th holiday comes from more than just having the day off. It means being able to gather with family and friends and celebrate the birth of our nation. We plan picnics, parades and places to sit during the fireworks display. We swell with unabashed patriotism, proudly waving flags and thanking our lucky stars that we are Americans.

July is the perfect time to celebrate being an American. From baseball and barbeque, blue jeans to blues, we take pride in those things we can call our own. As you plan your celebratory menus, be sure to include a true American original—popcorn.

Popcorn is one of the oldest and most beloved American foods. It's been around for thousands of years, yet over time, it has remained a humble little kernel of goodness. Wholesome and whole grain, popcorn provides needed fiber to the diet. Popcorn is naturally low in fat and calories, and for mere pennies per serving, it's gentle on the wallet and the waistline. For some star-spangled snacking, try these recipes from the Popcorn Board (www.popcorn.org).

Homerun Sugar Corn

Yield: 8 cups

Ingredients

1/2 cup unpopped popcorn
3 tablespoons white sugar
1/4 cup vegetable oil for popping

Directions

- Heat oil in medium sized pan until hot.
- Add popcorn and sprinkle all of the sugar over it.
- Cover and shake continuously until popped.



Peanut Butter Cups

Yield: 24 cups

Ingredients

1/2 cup peanut butter
1/2 cup butter or margarine
1 package (10 1/2 oz.) miniature marshmallows
6 cups freshly popped popcorn
6 cups spoon-size shredded wheat
1 cup dry roasted peanuts
1 cup raisins

Directions

- Melt peanut butter and butter in large microwavable bowl over HIGH heat for 1 minute.
- Add marshmallows and heat another minute or until marshmallows puff; stir.
- Add popcorn, shredded wheat, peanuts and raisins; stir gently.
- Place paper liners into two 12-cup muffin pans.
- Divide mixture into 24 cups.
- Bake at 250° for 10 minutes.
- Store "cups" in airtight container.