

# Fall *Teeming with Texture, Full of Flavor*

The fall season creeps in with subtle changes—a swirl of leaves, a shift in temperature, and the sound of buses back on the street. Before long, the unmistakable trademarks of fall are everywhere. A parade of pumpkins line neighborhood stoops, ghouls and goblins are hung to maximize their frightful effect, tweeds and woolen fabrics re-emerge in wardrobes, and tables are festooned with fallen leaves, bittersweet vines, corn husks, and mini gourds.

The aromas and flavors of fall are also unmistakable. Apple cider, gingerbread cookies and pumpkin pie get their spicy exotic tastes from what is commonly referred to as the “warm spices”. Warm spices are known for their strong and fragrant aromas and include cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, cloves and cardamom. Variations of these spices are

mixed together and sold as pumpkin pie spice, gingerbread spice and garam masala.

Before the signs of *winter* begin to creep in, take advantage of the warm flavors of fall. Pair pumpkin pie spices with another autumnal classic—popcorn—to create this Pumpkin Pie Spice Popcorn Bark, courtesy of the Popcorn Board. Blending whole grain popcorn with fall flavors, berries, nuts and melted chocolate creates one delicious treat.

Although the chocolate in this recipe puts this into the “decadent and don’t eat it every day” category, generally speaking popcorn is a great snack choice. Popcorn is a whole grain that provides carbohydrates and fiber to the diet and is naturally low in fat and calories. Consuming at least 3 or more ounce

equivalents of whole grains per day can reduce the risk of several chronic diseases and may help with weight maintenance. And for mere pennies per serving, popcorn is kind on your wallet and your waistline.

## “Pumpkin Pie Spice” Popcorn Bark

*Serves: 12 (3 inch squares)*

3 cups popped popcorn  
1 cup mini marshmallows  
1 cup chopped pecans  
1/2 cup “O”-shaped crisp cereal  
1/2 cup pepitas (salted pumpkin seeds) or shelled sunflower seeds  
1/2 cup dried sweetened cranberries  
1 teaspoon pumpkin spice mix  
2 packages (6 ounces each) white baking chocolate, chopped



- Line a large baking sheet with foil and spray lightly with cooking spray; set aside.
- In a large bowl, combine popcorn, marshmallows, pecans, cereal, pepitas, dried cranberries and pumpkin spice mix.
- Place chopped chocolate in a microwave-safe bowl and heat in microwave 1 minute. Stir to melt; microwave an additional minute. Stir until chocolate is melted and smooth. Pour melted chocolate over popcorn mixture. Mix until well coated and spread in an even layer into prepared pan. Cool at room temperature until firm (or refrigerate). Cut into squares to serve. Store in an airtight container.

