

# An Unlikely Culinary Column: Popcorn, an American Tradition

By Karen Kain

I love popcorn. Americans consume more popcorn by volume than any other snack. Popcorn is as American as baseball and apple pie. My husband was raised in England and they serve what he calls "popcorn" at movie theaters, we call it caramel corn. He did not grow up eating popcorn every Friday night in front of the TV like I did. Young children are fascinated with the magic of kernels popping, it is an inexpensive treat and I confess that I enjoy popcorn in almost any variation. I love travelling through the Chicago's O'Hare airport where they sell many different flavors of popcorn. I have a very hard time leaving without a bag.

When I came across a Buffalo Wing Popcorn recipe, it was a must try for me. It has a bit of spice but the sweetness makes it addicting. As with food, one thing led to another, and it started me on a search to come up with a few different recipes to share. The Buffalo Wing recipe was a hit! I came up with the idea to try Sriracha Popcorn. That was good, but I think the Buffalo Wing is still my favorite. These recipes lead me to searching for my favorite Cheese Corn recipe. I ordered the cheese powder and enjoyed having cheese corn at home. I definitely enjoyed doing research on all of these recipes and I hope you enjoy them as well.

## Buffalo Wing Popcorn

### Ingredients:

- 8 Cups popped popcorn (½ cup kernels)
- ¾ Cup sugar
- ¼ Cup water
- ¼ Cup Frank's Red Hot Original Sauce (or any hot wing sauce)
- 3 Tablespoon unsalted butter, cut into pieces
- 1 Teaspoon salt
- ½ Teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ Teaspoon cayenne pepper

### Directions:

Preheat oven to 300° F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Bring sugar and ¼ cup of water to a boil in a medium saucepan over medium high heat. Stirring to dissolve the sugar. Bring to a boil and stir frequently until a caramel amber color starts, 3-4 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in the hot sauce and butter, then return to boil and cook until heated



through. Remove from the heat and stir in salt, baking soda and cayenne. Working quickly and carefully, pour the caramel mixture over the popcorn and toss to coat. Spread the popcorn over the baking sheet and put in the oven for 15-20 minutes.

## Sriracha Popcorn

### Ingredients:

- 8 Cups popped popcorn (½ cup kernels)
- ¾ Cup sugar
- ¼ Cup water
- ¼ Cup Sriracha sauce
- 3 Tablespoon unsalted butter, cut into pieces
- 1 Teaspoon salt
- ½ Teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ Teaspoon cayenne pepper

### Directions:

Preheat oven to 300° F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Bring sugar and ¼ cup of water to a boil in a medium saucepan over medium high heat. Stirring to dissolve the sugar. Bring to a boil and stir frequently until a caramel amber color starts, 3-4 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in the hot sauce and butter and return to boil, then cook until heated through. Remove from the heat and stir in salt, baking soda and cayenne. Working quickly and carefully, pour the caramel mixture over the popcorn and toss to coat. Spread the popcorn over the baking sheet and put in the oven for 15-20 minutes.

## Traditional Caramel Corn

### Ingredients:

- 1 Cup butter
- 2 Cups packed brown sugar
- 1 Teaspoon salt
- ½ Cup light corn syrup
- 1 Teaspoon baking soda
- 8 Cups popped popcorn (½ cup kernels)

### Directions:

Preheat your oven to 200° F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Over a medium heat combine the first four ingredients and bring to a boil. Stir constantly for about 5 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in baking soda. Stir to fully incorporate. Pour over the popcorn and stir to coat. Put the popcorn onto the baking sheet and bake for 1 hour, mixing every 15 minutes. Remove from the oven and allow to dry and enjoy.

## Cheddar Cheese Popcorn

### Ingredients:

- 6 Tablespoons melted butter
- ½ Cup cheddar cheese powder
- ½ Teaspoon mustard powder
- ¼ Teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 8 cups popped popcorn
- Salt and pepper

### Directions:

In a large bowl add the popcorn and pour the melted butter over. In separate smaller bowl, combine the cheddar cheese powder, mustard powder, and cayenne pepper, sprinkle over the popcorn, toss to combine. Serve immediately.

**Note:** I ordered the cheddar cheese powder from Nuts.com.

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**Jason Nicholas, DVM**

Dr. Jason Nicholas is the newest member of our staff at Vernonia Vet. Dr. Nicholas grew up in Langhorne, Pennsylvania and attended the Royal Veterinary College in London, England in 2004. He did an internship in New York and did a residency at Dove Lewis Animal Hospital in Portland. He also worked in a veterinary clinic in Pennsylvania. He started his own side business, Preventive Vet, which is focused solely on educating pet owners on how to keep their animals healthy and safe. "We raise awareness about common toxicities, pet proofing the house, and other things," says Nicholas. In the clinic setting he says his strength is in medicines and general wellness care and that he enjoys educating clients. "It's a partnership and there's a lot of knowledge we can share," says Nicholas. "A big role of vets is to impart education and awareness."

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