



The Mini Page

Next Week:
Be thankful

Issue 46, 2021

Founded by Betty Debnam

Pop Up Some Fun!



photo courtesy The Popcorn Board

Mini Fact:

This photo series shows the kernel as it pops open to release the white popcorn.



Popcorn is a popular treat for kids and adults. According to industry experts, since the COVID-19 pandemic began, we're popping a lot more at home.

This week, The Mini Page learns more about this favorite snack.

A tradition of the Americas

Thousands of years ago, popcorn popped up in South and Central America. It became such an important food to the Aztecs that they used it in religious ceremonies. (The Aztecs were Native Americans who lived in the area that is now Mexico.)

They decorated their headdresses with popcorn and put popcorn necklaces on statues of their gods.

In the 1500s, the Spanish saw Aztec women wearing strands of popcorn in their hair and dancing a popcorn dance. A Spanish explorer described popcorn as a "kind of corn which bursts when parched and ... makes itself look like a very white flower."

Popcorn takes off

In 1893, at the Chicago World's Fair, a businessman showed fairgoers the first movable popcorn popper. The machines were powered by steam or gas.

Street vendors began selling popcorn wherever a crowd gathered, such as at fairs and parks. During the Great Depression in the 1930s, popcorn was often the only treat people could afford. Popcorn businesses boomed.

What is popcorn?

Corn is a member of the grass family, and it is a cereal grain. Popcorn is a type of corn, or **maize** (maze). Here are the four most common kinds of American corn:

Sweet corn is the corn we eat as corn on the cob.

Field corn is not as tender and sweet as sweet corn. It is used mainly to feed livestock and to make corn products such as corn syrup, cereal or ethanol fuel. Most of the corn grown in the United States is field corn.

Indian corn has tough black, brown and yellow kernels. It is used for decoration and is not usually eaten as it is. Some forms are ground to make tortillas or taco shells.

Popcorn is the only corn that pops.

What makes it pop?

There is a small drop of water inside the starch in each kernel. When the kernel is heated, the water starts to **expand**, or get bigger. When the water gets hot enough, it turns to steam. It starts to melt the starch. The starch turns into a super-hot, jelly-like goop.

The kernel keeps getting hotter until it reaches about 450 degrees. As the goop boils inside the kernel, the pressure grows and grows. Finally, the hull can't hold everything in anymore, and it explodes. The mushy white starch spills out and cools immediately.

Popcorn facts

Popcorn is a whole grain and is good for you.

Most of the popcorn in the world is grown in the United States Corn Belt: Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska and Ohio.

Popcorn kernels 1,000 years old have still popped.

Microwave popcorn kernels are coated with oil so they will get hot enough to pop.

Parts of popcorn

The unpopped **kernel** is the actual seed of the popcorn plant.

The **hull** is the outside brown covering over the seed, or kernel.

The white part we love to eat is the food for the growing part of the seed. The food is called **starch**.

Resources



On the Web:

- popcorn.org

At the library:

- "Let's Pop, Pop, Popcorn" by Cynthia Schumerth
- "Tomie dePaola's The Popcorn Book" by Tomie dePaola

The Mini Page® © 2021 Andrews McMeel Syndication

Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of popcorn are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:



AMERICA, AZTEC,
CEREAL, EXPAND,
EXPLODE, FIELD,
HEAT, HULL, INDIAN,
KERNEL, MAIZE,
MELT, MICROWAVE,
POPCORN, POPPER,
STARCH, STEAM,
SWEET, TREAT, WHOLE.

S B L W R B C Y M A I Z E P A
P L N H A C I I S T A R C H V
P K A O C E T Z A Z U T L E M
O E I L E V A W O R C I M S E
P D D E V S C I M T A E H X L
C O N D L E I F T A Q T P H A
O L I G V B R R X V E A T U E
R P P O P P E R Z E N T M L R
N X W W K A M P W D F I S L E
H E Z C T Q A S L E N R E K C

Cook's Corner

Mini Popcorn Balls

You'll need:

- 10 cups popped corn
- 1 cup diced dried fruit (papaya, mango or peaches)
- 1 cup butterscotch chips
- 1 (1-pound) bag miniature marshmallows

- 1/4 cup (1/2 stick) butter
- orange food coloring



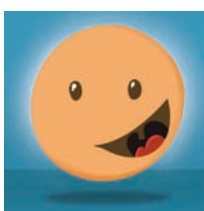
* You'll need an adult's help with this recipe.

What to do:

1. Place popcorn, fruit and butterscotch chips in large bowl; set aside.
2. Heat marshmallows and butter in a large saucepan over low heat until melted and smooth. Stir in several drops of food coloring.
3. Pour over popcorn and candy, tossing to coat evenly. Cool for 5 minutes.
4. Grease hands and form into 3-inch balls. Makes about 16 balls.

7 Little Words for Kids

Use the letters in the boxes to make a word with the same meaning as the clue. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in the solution. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.



1. body's outer layer (4) _____
2. where Disney World is (7) _____
3. aunt's child (6) _____
4. glad feeling (9) _____
5. sleepy (6) _____
6. U.S. soccer star Megan (7) _____
7. very pretty (9) _____

ESS	SIN	UTI	IN
WSY	RIDA	HAP	NOE
COU	SK	FUL	BEA
RAPI	DRO	PIN	FLO

Answers: skin, Florida, cousin, happiness, drowsy, Rapinoe, beautiful.

Mini Jokes



Paco: Why don't people tell jokes about popcorn?
Paula: Because they're so corny!

Eco Note



Experts in Malaysia's part of Borneo conducted tests on 30 orangutans to see if the endangered primates had been infected with the coronavirus. All of the samples collected by vets came back negative, but the team says it will continue to monitor the apes and test them regularly. Some domestic animals have become infected with COVID-19, and the Atlanta zoo just announced several of its gorillas had tested positive.

adapted with permission from Earthweek.com

For later:

Look through your newspaper for recipes that use corn or those for special popcorn treats.

Teachers: Follow and interact with The Mini Page on Facebook!



The Mini Page® © 2021 Andrews McMeel Syndication

The **NEW Mini Spy Booklets** volumes 4 and 5! Features 48 of your favorite puzzles from The Mini Page! Volumes 1, 2 and 3 are still available!

Help Mini Spy and other classic characters from The Mini Page find hidden objects from a list of clues.

The 8.5x11-inch booklet is just \$4, plus \$1 shipping and handling.

Visit **MiniPageBooks.com**, or call **844-426-1256** for more information.

Mail payment to:
Andrews McMeel Universal,
Mini Page Books,
1130 Walnut,
Kansas City, MO 64106.

