

# SHAPE

## 25 Easy, Delicious Ways to Flavor Popcorn Without Salt

By K. Aleisha Feters February 28, 2013

Swap the chemical- and sodium-laden microwave bag for a sweet, savory, or spicy healthy homemade snack

The next time you pop in a movie, rethink your snack habit: Even if you split the bag of microwave popcorn, you'll down 20 percent of your daily allotment of sodium—plus oftentimes trans fat and scary preservatives or colorings. And OD'ing on sodium has been linked to higher blood pressure, heart disease, stomach cancer, and weak bones, in addition to water retention and bloating.

That doesn't mean you have to swap your treat for plain air-popped corn. Virtuous as it is—three cups provides as much fiber as a cup of cooked brown rice and more antioxidants than a serving of fruit or vegetables for less than 100 calories—it's also pretty bland. Luckily that blank canvas means it's perfect for crafting a snack to satisfy your craving, whether that's savory, spicy, or sweet.

These mouthwatering ideas from top nutritionists, food bloggers, and healthy chefs are so good, you'll start having movie night more often. Simply pour 3 cups freshly popped corn into a bowl, then slowly add the toppings while stirring continuously with a spatula so every piece is coated.

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# Savory



**Spicy Paprika:** Toss with  $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon chili powder and  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon paprika.  
–Nutricosmetics expert Paula Simpson

**Thai:** Toss with 1 teaspoon each curry powder and dried basil,  $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon cayenne, and zest of 1 lime. –Matthew Kadey, R.D., author of Muffin Tin Chef

**Chipotle Chocolate:** Toss with  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon cocoa powder and  $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon chipotle seasoning. –Cynthia Sass, M.P.H., R.D., author of the New York Times best seller S.A.S.S! Yourself Slim

**Cajun:** In small saucepan, heat 1 teaspoon canola oil over medium heat. Stir in  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon each cumin, garlic powder, dried basil, dried thyme, and paprika;  $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon black pepper; and 1 dash cayenne pepper. Reduce heat

to low and cook for 1 minute. Drizzle over popcorn and toss. –Laura Cipullo, R.D., owner of Laura Cipullo Whole Nutrition Services in New York City

**Chili Lime:** Drizzle with 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil and a few shakes of Tabasco. Toss with 1 teaspoon each freshly squeezed lime juice and lime zest, 1/4 teaspoon cumin, and 1/8 teaspoon each chili powder and chili flakes. –Chef Candice Kumai, author of Cook Yourself Sexy

**BBQ:** Toss with 1 teaspoon smoked paprika and 1/2 teaspoon each garlic powder and onion powder. –Rachel Meltzer Warren, R.D.

**Wasabi:** Toss with 1 1/2 teaspoons wasabi powder, 1 teaspoon sugar, 1/8 teaspoon cayenne, and 1 finely crumbled sheet nori. –Kadey

**Sweet Chili:** Combine 1 1/2 teaspoons honey and 1 dash each garlic powder, chili powder, and cayenne pepper. Microwave mixture on high for 15 seconds. Drizzle over popcorn and toss with 2 tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan cheese. –Cipullo

## Sweet



**Mexican Hot Chocolate:** Toss with 1/4 teaspoon each cocoa powder and cinnamon. –Tiffany Mendell, R.D., of Keri Glassman, Nutritious Life in New York City

**Fruit Salad:** Toss with 2 tablespoons each dried cranberries, dried tart cherries, and raisins. –Jim White, R.D., spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

**Pumpkin Pie** Toss with 1 tablespoon sugar, 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon, 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger, and 1/8 teaspoon each allspice, ground cloves, and nutmeg. –Matthew Kadey, R.D., author of Muffin Tin Chef

**Caramel:** In a small saucepan, simmer 1 1/2 teaspoons olive or coconut oil and 1 1/2 tablespoons pure maple syrup. Drizzle over popcorn and toss. –Renée Loux, green expert, organic chef, culinary art teacher, and author of The Balanced Plate

**Chocolate Peanut:** Toss popcorn with 1 tablespoon dark chocolate chips and 1 tablespoon peanuts. –Amanda Buthmann, R.D., of Keri Glassman, Nutritious Life in New York City

**Cinnamon Sugar:** Toss with 1 1/2 teaspoons each coconut butter and coconut sugar and 1/8 teaspoon cinnamon. –Loux

**Swiss Mix:** Toss with 1/4 cup mini marshmallows and 1 tablespoon hot chocolate mix. –Rachel Rappaport, Coconut & Lime food blogger

**Spiced Nut:** Toss with 1 teaspoon cinnamon, 1/8 teaspoon cloves, and 1 tablespoon each sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, and raw unsalted slivered almonds. –Laura Cipullo, R.D., owner of Laura Cipullo Whole Nutrition Services in New York City

**Dark Chocolate:** Heat 2 tablespoons dark chocolate chips in the microwave in 10-second intervals, stirring with a spatula after each interval until melted. Drizzle on popcorn and toss. –Michelle Nabatian Routhenstein, R.D., of Keri Glassman, Nutritious Life in New York City

**Agave Crunch:** Drizzle with 1 tablespoon agave nectar and toss with 2 tablespoons granola and 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon. –White

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