

POP



CULTURE

We learned a lot about popcorn during the making of this Hollywood issue, starting with the fact that we eat a ton of it. The average American inhales 200 cups of popcorn a year, and not just at movies and ball games: We're grabbing whole bags of it at the grocery store now, too. Meanwhile, popcorn shops and food trucks have popped up around the country selling over-the-top flavors, and chefs have started working the snack food into appetizers, desserts and more. Here's a quick look at the popcorn trend from coast to coast.

POP OF THE MORNING

Before it was a favorite snack, popcorn was a popular breakfast food. In fact, in the late 1800s, people like Ella Kellogg (from that Kellogg family) ate it just like cereal, in a bowl with milk. Today, chefs are adding popcorn to their own breakfast menus:



Popcorn Grits
Boiler House
San Antonio

Chef Jeff White created this dish to use up leftover popcorn. Diners loved it so much that he kept it on the menu. boilerhousesa.com



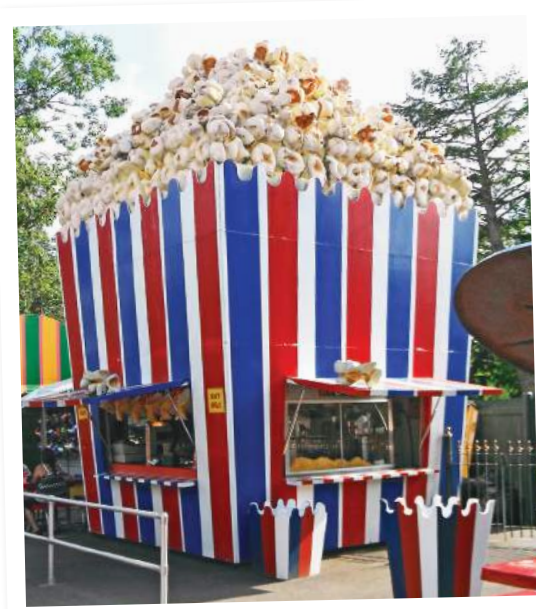
Caramel Corn Bar
Glazed Gourmet Doughnuts
Charleston, SC

Of all the choices at this doughnut shop, this is the one people ask about most. The owners keep extra popcorn custard in the fridge for skeptics to try. glazedgourmet.com



Caramel Corn Latte
West Egg Café
Atlanta

You won't find a pump of flavored syrup in this drink: The pastry chef steeps caramel corn in hot milk, then adds caramel sauce. westeggcafe.com



TALL ORDER

The folks at Canobie Lake Park in Salem, NH, really know how to welcome visitors. Right at the entrance sits a 24-foot supersize popcorn stand. It opened in 2007, and now many visitors stop for a half-yard sleeve of popcorn on their way into the park.



KERNELS OF TRUTH

Popcorn makes the popping sound when it releases water vapor, not when the kernel cracks open.

TOP IN POP?

These five cities all call themselves Popcorn Capital of the World. Who deserves the title?

MARION, OH

Marion throws a popcorn festival every September, but the Wyandot Popcorn Museum, which houses 51 restored machines, is open year-round.

NORTH LOUP, NE

North Loup hosted one of the country's first popcorn celebrations, Popcorn Days, in 1901; it still happens every August.

VALPARAISO, IN

Orville Redenbacher set up shop here in the 1960s, and a statue of him stands in Central Park Plaza.

SCHALLER, IA

Schaller marks its location on the Iowa map with a giant kernel; it's home to one of Jolly Time Pop Corn's factories.

VAN BUREN, IN

Van Buren's residents take the city's annual Popcorn Parade seriously: Some attendees set up lawn chairs five days before it begins.

THIS PAGE: GRITS: KIMBERLY DAVIS; DOUGHNUT: ANNA ROSS; LATTE: BEN JOHNSON; POPCORN STAND: DAVE CAMPBELL; KERNELS: MARIO METZINGEV/STUDIO D; OPPOSITE PAGE: JEFF HARRIS/STUDIO D.

HAVE A BALL



A ball drops in Chagrin Falls, OH, every New Year's Eve, but it's a **40-POUND** ball of popcorn covered with lights, from the Chagrin Falls Popcorn Shop.

The popcorn lovers of Sac City, IA, have built three massive popcorn balls during the past 20 years, and in 2009 they finished their biggest yet: a **5,000-POUND** ball that's now on display at the Sac City Museum.

In 2013, the theme at the Indiana State Fair was popcorn, and locals celebrated by making a **6,500-POUND** popcorn ball, beating Iowa's best effort. Unfortunately, participants have nothing to show for their work: The finished product was hacked apart and fed to livestock.



KERNELS OF TRUTH

Popcorn insiders call unpopped kernels at the bottom of the bag "old maids"; legend has it a Chicago popcorn peddler coined the term in the late 19th century.



KERNELS OF TRUTH

Popcorn comes in two shapes: snowflake, popular in movie theaters because it puffs up more, and mushroom, commonly used for candied and caramel corn because of its sturdier structure.

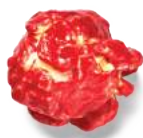


ANY WAY YOU POP IT...

We searched the country for the best popcorn flavors. Here are some favorites:



MAPLE BACON
Ty & Maddy's
tyandmaddys.com



FIREBALL
Not Just Popcorn
popcorncarnival.com



**BUCKEYE CARAMEL
DRIZZLE**
Harlow's Popcorn
harlowspopcorn.com



WHITE TRUFFLE
Cassie's Gourmet Popcorn
cassiesgourmetpopcorn.com



**BUTTER RUM AND
CRANBERRY CRUNCH**
CrunchDaddy Popcorn
crunchdaddy.com



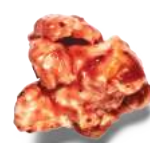
LEMON POPPY SEED
Tastebuds Popcorn
tastebudspopcorn.com



PHILLY CHEESESTEAK
Popcorn Buddha
popcornbuddhausa.com



BLUEBERRY MUFFIN
Heavenly Gourmet Popcorn
hgpopcorn.com



**PINK PEPPERCORN
AND STRAWBERRY**
CaJa Popcorn
cajapopcorn.com



ITALIAN SAUSAGE
Popcorn Haven
popcornhaven.com



PINK'ADELIC
Popped
bestgourmetpopcorn.com



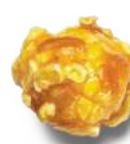
**RASPBERRY
GREEK YOGURT**
Popcornopolis
popcornopolis.com



BBQ RIBS
Southern Kernels
Gourmet Popcorn
southernkernels.com



BLOODY MARY
Poppington's
Gourmet Popcorn
poppingtons.com



VANILLA BUTTERNUT
Campbell's Sweets Factory
campbellssweets.com



CRAB LEGS
Chicagoland Popcorn
chicagolandpopcorn.com



ELVIS PRESLEY
Smoky Mountain
Popcorn Co.
smpopcorn.com



**LITTLE HILLS
RED WINE**
Kernel Dave's Pophouse
kerneldaves.com



MAC NUT PESTO
Primo Popcorn
primopopcorn.com



BIRTHDAY CAKE
Popcorn Heaven
popcornheaven.com



SUNDAY SUPPER
Dakota's Pop Parlor
chefdakota.com



KING CAKE
Popcorn Bistro
popcornbistro.com



TOASTED RAV
POPtions!
poptionspopcorn.com



BLUE RASPBERRY
Mom & Popcorn
momandpopcorn.com



SEATTLE STYLE ESPRESSO
Kukuruza Gourmet
Popcorn
kukuruza.com



CINNAMON BUN
Emma's Gourmet Popcorn
emmaspopcorn.com



BUFFALO BLUE
The Popcorn Fanatic
thepopcornfanatic.com



KEY LIME PIE
Kernel Encore
kernelencorepopcorn.com



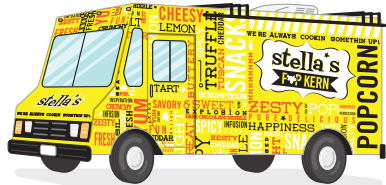
SPICY THAI PB&J
Poplandia
poplandiapopcorn.com



SAMOA COOKIE
Metropolis Popcorn
popohio.com

CORN on the CURB

These food trucks are pushing serious popcorn.



STELLA'S POPKERN, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Owner Kristina Kern's last name means "kernel" in German. She usually sells popcorn by the bag, but she'll set aside a gallon tin of your favorite flavor if you call the day before.

stellaspopkern.com



JACKSON HOLE POP, JACKSON HOLE, WY

Jackson Hole is well-known for its camping spots, and the city's popcorn truck is popular for its Campfire Kettle, a smoky kettle corn.

jhpopcorn.com



POPPED! REPUBLIC, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Most of the flavors served from this D.C. truck have political names, like Congressional Cheddar and Mount Vernon Maple Glaze.

poppedrepublic.com



BROOKLYN POPCORN, NEW YORK CITY

This truck has a rotating menu of 15 flavors, but the Brooklyn combo (white cheddar mixed with chocolate-covered kernels) is always available: It's the favorite.

brooklynpopcorn.com

FLAVOR DEBATE: Cheddar vs. Caramel



49%
CHEESY

25%
MIXED TOGETHER

26%
CARAMEL

Cheesy won by a landslide in our Facebook poll, but we were even more surprised to learn that so many people like the two flavors mixed together. Some popcorn companies are already aware: After decades of keeping sweet and salty separate, they're combining the two.

The cheddar-caramel combo's official name, Chicago Mix, is trademarked by a St. Paul sweetshop, so look out for other names, like Windy City Mix and Caramel Cheddar.



KERNELS OF TRUTH

During the 1920s, you couldn't buy popcorn at movie theaters. Most theaters banned the snack because it was too noisy.