

# Caramel Popcorn (Caramel Corn)

Learn to make perfect homemade caramel popcorn with this easy recipe. Sweet, crunchy, and irresistible - better than store-bought!

15 min

PREP

55 min

COOK

1h 10min

TOTAL

8

SERVINGS

Easy

DIFFICULTY

## Ingredients

- 1 cup unsalted butter
- 2 cup brown sugar
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

## Instructions

### 1 Prepare the Workspace

Preheat oven to 120°C (250°F). Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper and spray lightly with cooking spray.

### 2 Pop the Corn

Pop 1/2 cup popcorn kernels using your preferred method until you have about 12 cups of popped corn. Remove all unpopped kernels and place popcorn in a large bowl. Keep warm in the preheated oven while making caramel.

### 3 Make the Caramel Base

Melt 1/2 cup butter in a medium heavy-bottomed saucepan over medium heat until fully melted and bubbling, about 2 minutes. Add 1 cup brown sugar and 1/4 cup corn syrup, stirring until mixture is smooth and well combined.

### 4 Increase heat to medium-high and bring mixture to a rolling boil, stirring constantly. Once boiling, stop stirring and let boil for 4 minutes until mixture turns deep amber and reaches 121°C (250°F) on a candy thermometer.

- 5 Remove saucepan from heat immediately. Quickly stir in 1 teaspoon vanilla extract, 1/2 teaspoon salt, and 1/2 teaspoon baking soda until mixture stops foaming and bubbling, about 30 seconds.
- 6 **Coat the Popcorn**

Remove warm popcorn from oven and pour hot caramel over it. Use a large wooden spoon to toss and stir vigorously until all popcorn is evenly coated with caramel, about 2-3 minutes.
- 7 **Bake for Crispiness**

Spread caramel popcorn evenly on the prepared baking sheet. Bake for 45 minutes, stirring every 15 minutes to prevent sticking and ensure even browning.
- 8 Remove from oven and let cool completely on baking sheet until caramel hardens, about 30 minutes. Break apart any large clumps with your hands before serving.

## Tips

Use freshly popped popcorn and remove all unpopped kernels before coating. Stale or pre-flavored popcorn will not absorb the caramel properly and can affect the final texture.

Keep the popcorn warm in the oven (200°F) while preparing the caramel. Warm popcorn accepts the caramel coating much better than room temperature corn.

Use a heavy-bottomed saucepan to prevent the caramel from burning. Stir constantly once the sugar begins to melt, and watch carefully as caramel can go from perfect to burnt very quickly.

Work quickly when coating the popcorn with caramel, as it begins to set immediately. Have everything ready and use a large spoon or spatula to toss the mixture efficiently.

The caramel mixture will bubble vigorously when you add the baking soda - this is normal. Use a large enough pot to accommodate the foaming, and stir quickly to incorporate.

Stir the caramel corn every 15 minutes during baking to ensure even coating and prevent burning. The edges tend to brown faster than the center.

Let the caramel popcorn cool completely before breaking apart. Trying to separate it while still warm will result in sticky, messy clumps.

Line your baking sheet with parchment paper and lightly grease it to prevent sticking. This makes cleanup much easier and prevents the caramel from bonding to the pan.