The beginning of a new year marks the annual pledge many of us make for healthier eating habits after the long gluttonous run from Halloween thru New Year’s day. While the holidays are fun for both body and mind, there comes the desire for clean, simple, lighter eating. Cue popcorn.

Popcorn is a simple yet satisfying whole grain. By itself, popcorn is delicious and unoffsetting. Popcorn is naturally low in fat and calories, which makes it a great choice when trying to lose holiday weight. The fiber in popcorn makes you feel fuller longer, which helps curb hunger. Eating a little more here means you’ll eat a little less there.

Yet health and wellness-minded consumers today look for added nutrients to boost the system. Why eat only whole grains when you can sprinkle on protein and antioxidants? Powders, herbs, root products, and spices like turmeric, matcha, maca, and chia can make your snacks more nutrient rich. And while there’s no substitute for a balanced diet, pairing these on-trend ingredients with whole grain popcorn is a natural.

The following recipes are courtesy of the Popcorn Board (www.popcorn.org).

**Maca Almond Popcorn Bars**

Love almonds? Then you’ll love the taste of these chewy, yummy popcorn bars that boast whole grain, fiber, protein, and an extra nutrient kick from Maca root.

Makes: 16 bars

**Ingredients:**
- 8 cups unsalted, unbuttered popped popcorn
- 3/4 cup sliced almonds
- 1/2 cup flaked oats
- 1/3 cup almond butter
- 1/3 cup brown rice syrup
- 3 tbsp honey
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 2 tsp maca root powder

**Directions:**
1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line 8-inch square baking pan with parchment paper. Place popcorn in large mixing bowl.
2. Spread almonds and oats on baking sheet; bake for about 5 minutes or until lightly browned and toasted. Let cool completely; add to bowl with popcorn.

3. In saucepan set over medium heat, combine almond butter, brown rice syrup, honey and salt. Stir in maca root powder until smooth and dissolved.
4. In large mixing bowl, pour almond butter mixture over uncooked popcorn mixture; toss gently to combine. Transfer mixture to prepared baking pan, patting down and spreading to edges. Let cool until firm. Cut into bars.

**Honey Matcha Popcorn**

Enjoy the simplicity of whole grain popcorn with a sprinkling of antioxidant-rich matcha green tea and just a touch of honey.

Makes: 4 servings

**Ingredients:**
- 12 cups unsalted, unbuttered popped popcorn
- 1/4 cup butter
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1 tsp matcha green tea powder
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 tbsp black sesame seeds

**Directions:**
1. Preheat oven to 300°F. Line large, rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Place popcorn in large mixing bowl.
2. In small saucepan set over medium heat, melt together butter, honey and salt; stir until dissolved. Pour over popcorn; toss gently to combine. Spread onto baking sheet. Sprinkle with sesame seeds.
3. Bake, stirring occasionally, for 25 to 30 minutes or until popcorn is dry. Let cool completely before serving.

**Ginger Turmeric Popcorn**

This slightly sweet but savory popcorn snack will tickle your taste buds with subtly exotic flavors – perfect for sharing and delighting friends.

Makes: 12 cups

**Ingredients:**
- 8 cups unsalted, unbuttered popped popcorn
- 1/4 cup light olive oil
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 2 tbsp honey
- 1 tsp grated lemon zest
- 1/2 tsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp ground turmeric

**Directions:**
1. Preheat oven to 325°F. Line large, rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Place popcorn in large mixing bowl.
2. In small saucepan set over medium heat, combine olive oil, honey and salt; stir in lemon zest, ginger and turmeric. Pour over popcorn and toss gently to combine. Spread popcorn on prepared baking sheet. Bake for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally, or until popcorn is dry and crisp. Let cool completely before serving.

**Coconut Crunch Chia Clusters**

If you’re a coconut lover, this recipe will deliver the goods, along with the crunch and nutrient punch from omega-3 filled chia seeds.

Makes: 6 cups

**Ingredients:**
- 8 cups unsalted, unbuttered popped popcorn
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1/3 cup butter
- 1 tbsp honey
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 cup coconut flakes
- 3 tbsp chia seeds

**Directions:**
1. Preheat oven to 325°F. Line large, rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Place popcorn in large mixing bowl.
2. In small saucepan set over medium heat, combine sugar, butter, honey and salt; bring to light boil; stirring often, until melted.
3. Spread sugar mixture over popcorn. Add coconut flakes and chia seeds; toss gently to combine.
4. Spread mixture on prepared baking sheet. Bake for about 30 minutes or until popcorn is lightly toasted. Let cool completely before breaking into clusters for serving.