Popcorn Pleases

at Potlucks and Picnics

’Tis the season of potlucks and picnics and you’re in a pickle. What do you bring that’s fresh and unique and won’t duplicate efforts? How about an updated twist on an old-timey classic, the Macaroni Salad? In our recipe, whole grain popcorn elbows out the noodle for a delicious and intriguing ingredient that will have everyone asking just who made the salad.

Chances are you grew up eating a version of this at your grandma’s house, which may have contained peas, water chestnuts, cubed pimento cheese, bacon, and mayo. And while you may be tempted to write this combination off along with the memory of a jello mold with canned fruit cocktail, give this fresh new recipe a try and taste for yourself how surprisingly good it is.

Popcorn Salad
Yield: 8 cups

Ingredients
- 8 cups popped popcorn
- 6 slices bacon
- 1/3 cup mayonnaise
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup chopped celery
- 1/2 cup shredded carrot
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 4 green onions, thinly sliced, including greens
- 1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese

Lettuce leaves

Directions
1. Place popcorn in extra large bowl.
2. Sauté bacon until crispy, then drain on paper towels. Chop or crumble bacon and reserve.
3. Mix together mayonnaise, garlic powder, onion powder, salt and pepper in small bowl. Set aside.
4. Combine celery, carrot, bell pepper and green onions in medium bowl.
5. Add mayonnaise mixture to vegetables. Mix thoroughly.
6. Immediately before serving, add mayonnaise mixture, bacon and cheese to popcorn in bowl. Toss very gently to just combine. Do not over mix.
7. Serve on lettuce leaves. If desired, garnish with extra shredded cheese and chopped bacon.

Note: This salad doesn’t hold up long, so mix at the last minute and serve immediately.