Hot Wasabi Popcorn

Yield: 8-1 cup servings

- 8 cups popped popcorn, warm
- 3 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 2 teaspoons prepared wasabi
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar, optional

• Place popcorn in a large bowl.
• Microwave butter 20 seconds or until melted; stir in wasabi until well blended.
• Drizzle wasabi butter over popcorn and stir to distribute.
• Sprinkle with salt and sugar, if desired, and stir again.

Bombay Popcorn

Yield: 8-1 cup servings

- 8 cups popped popcorn, warm
- 3 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 2 teaspoons curry powder or hot curry powder
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- 1/2 cup toasted coconut, golden raisins or sliced almonds, optional

• Place popcorn in a large bowl.
• Microwave butter 20 seconds or until melted; stir in curry powder until well blended.
• Drizzle seasoned butter over popcorn and stir to distribute.
• Sprinkle with salt, sugar and optional ingredients; stir gently until blended.

Tex Mex Mix

Yield: 2 quarts

- 2 quarts popcorn popped in oil
- 2 teaspoons ground chili powder
- 2 teaspoons paprika
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 cup cubed Monterey Jack cheese (about 1/4 inch cubes)

• Keep popped popcorn warm. Mix seasonings together and toss with popcorn.
• Add cheese and mix thoroughly.

July is the perfect time to celebrate the diversity that is America. Somewhere in between a “melting pot” and a “salad bowl,” America is a nation teeming with a rich blend of races, cultures and religions. As you plan summer gatherings, offer up a taste of what it means to be an American today, using an American original—popcorn!

Popcorn is one of the oldest American foods whose roots reach back thousands of years. Did you know?
• Some of the oldest ears of popcorn were found in 1948 in west central New Mexico. These ears were proven to be about 4,000 years old.
• Popcorn was used by the Native Americans as a staple in their diet and for decoration. Sixteenth century Aztec Indians used popcorn in their ceremonies; young women danced a “popcorn dance” and wore garlands of popcorn in their hair.
• Early Americans threw popcorn kernels directly into the fire or into heated sand. Once popped, the corn was sifted and then pounded into a fine, powdery meal and later mixed with water for eating.

In South America, kernels of popcorn found in burial grounds in the coastal deserts of North Chile were so well preserved they would still pop even though they were 1,000 years old!

Despite its old age, popcorn has remained relatively unchanged. It’s still a small, simple kernel of goodness that’s fun to make and eat. Popcorn’s continued popularity comes from the fact that it’s a versatile whole grain snack the whole family can enjoy. Try it with your favorite sweet or savory topping or try one of the following recipes for a truly great taste of America today!