

## Spicy Caramel Popcorn

*Adapted from Paula Deen's recipe for Grandma Paul's Caramel Corn  
(<http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/paula-deen/grandma-pauls-caramel-corn-recipe/index.html>)*  
Makes about 14 cups

*While I wouldn't put a lot of faith in a recipe for caramel corn from Jacques Pepin, I assumed that Paula Deen knew her stuff when it came to this sticky sweet treat. My assumption was correct and the final product was gift worthy and stress free. I added pecans and cayenne to kick things up a notch.*

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup vegetable or canola oil  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup white popcorn kernels  
2 cups roasted and lightly salted pecans (peanuts could also be substituted)  
1 cup brown sugar  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup unsalted butter  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup light corn syrup  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon cayenne  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon baking soda

Preheat the oven to 225 degrees. Spray two baking sheets generously with cooking spray.

In a large pot, heat the vegetable oil over medium high heat. Add one popcorn kernel and place the lid slightly askew (to allow the steam to escape) on top. When the kernel pops, add the rest of the kernels and cook, shaking occasionally and with the cover askew, until all of the kernels have popped. Remove the lid and pour the popcorn into a large bowl with the pecans.

In a small saucepan, combine the brown sugar, unsalted butter, corn syrup, salt and cayenne. Bring to a boil and cook for 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the baking soda.

Immediately pour the butter mixture over the popcorn and pecans and use spoons to toss until well coated. Divide the mixture between the two baking sheets and spread out. Bake for 1 hour, stirring the mixture every 15 minutes. Remove from the oven and let cool before stuffing into bags or tins for gift giving. Store in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks.