

Homemade Caramel Corn: Your Go-To Recipe for Sweet & Crunchy Perfection

! This is the kind of sweet and salty perfection that will have everyone reaching for more.



OVEN
250°F

TIME
5 min

PRINT
Recipe Card

SAVE
PDF

INGREDIENTS

- 7 quarts plain popped popcorn (about 1 cup unpopped kernels)
- 2 cups dry roasted peanuts (optional)
- 2 cups brown sugar (packed)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup light corn syrup
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup margarine (or unsalted butter)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Prepare : Popcorn & Pans:** Place the plain popped popcorn into two large, shallow, greased baking pans. You can use roasting pans, jelly roll pans, or even disposable roasting pans. If using, add the dry roasted peanuts to the popcorn and mix gently. Set aside.
- 2. Preheat : Oven & Make Caramel Base:** Preheat your oven to 250°F (120°C). In a medium saucepan (at least 3-quart size, as the mixture will foam), combine the brown sugar, light corn syrup, margarine (or butter), and 1 teaspoon of salt. Bring the mixture to a boil over medium heat, stirring just enough to combine the ingredients.
- 3. Boil : Caramel:** Once the mixture begins to boil, continue to boil for exactly 5 minutes, stirring constantly to prevent scorching. Do not stop stirring during this phase.
- 4. Add : Baking Soda & Vanilla:** Remove the saucepan immediately from the heat. Stir in the baking soda and vanilla extract. The mixture will become light, foamy, and expand considerably.
- 5. Coat : Popcorn:** Immediately pour the hot, foamy caramel mixture evenly over the prepared popcorn in the baking pans. Stir gently with a spoon or spatula to coat the popcorn as much as possible. Don't worry too much about getting every single kernel coated at this stage; the oven baking will help.
- 6. Bake & : Stir:** Place the pans in the preheated oven. Bake for 1 hour, removing the pans every 15 minutes to give the caramel corn a good, thorough stir. This continuous stirring during baking helps to evenly coat the popcorn and ensures it gets beautifully crispy and

caramelized.

7. **Cool & Store:** Line your counter or a large baking sheet with wax paper or parchment paper. Carefully spread the baked caramel corn onto the prepared wax paper and use a spatula or your hands (once cool enough to handle) to separate the pieces. Let it cool completely until hardened and crisp. Once fully cooled, store in airtight containers or resealable bags at room temperature. It will stay fresh and crunchy for several days!

SWAPS & NOTES

Popcorn: Use plain, air-popped popcorn for the best results. Avoid microwave popcorn with butter or strong seasonings, as it can interfere with the caramel flavor.

You can adjust the amount of popcorn slightly if you prefer a thicker or thinner caramel coating.

Peanuts: Dry roasted peanuts add a wonderful salty crunch.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Use Large Pans: Having enough surface area in your baking pans is crucial for the caramel corn to crisp up properly.

Constant Stirring (Boiling): When boiling the caramel, constant stirring prevents burning and ensures even cooking.

Act Fast with Baking Soda: The baking soda reaction happens quickly.

Pour the caramel over the popcorn immediately after adding it.

More recipes: [ChefManiac.com](https://chefmaniac.com)

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/homemade-caramel-corn-your-go-to-recipe-for-sweet-crunchy-perfection/>