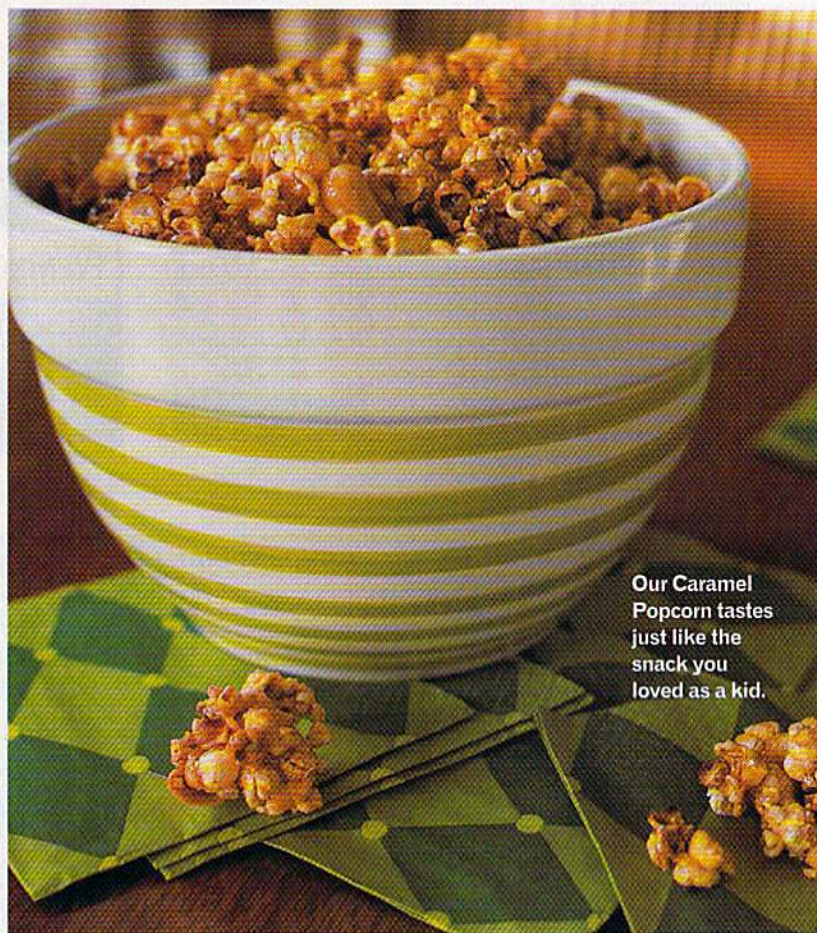


Munch Better

Satisfy your urge to snack with these easy, healthy recipes. BY MYRA KORNFELD



Our Caramel Popcorn tastes just like the snack you loved as a kid.

GROWING UP, I LOVED snacks like caramel corn, sour cream and onion dip, and ice cream drizzled with chocolate syrup. I still crave those foods whenever I have a snack attack. But I don't like how I feel after I eat them. So I've developed easy recipes for snacks—all versions of those I ate as a child—that not only satisfy my cravings but are better for me than the originals.

The healthier snacks I created use less-processed ingredients, are lower in sugar or fat, and don't have preservatives. For example, conventional

caramel corn, granola bars, and Rice Krispie treats typically contain corn syrup, marshmallows, or other unhealthy ingredients. My recipes use more wholesome sweeteners like brown rice syrup and maple syrup to make them chewy and satisfying. The classic dip made from sour cream and Lipton onion soup mix is loaded with saturated fat, corn starch, and chemicals. My dip tastes just as good using healthier oil, a natural sweetener, and fresh shallots. Compared to roasted nuts (which are actually fried), my crispy, high-protein roasted chickpeas have less fat and more fiber. Finally, in

lieu of ice cream covered with chocolate-flavored high-fructose corn syrup, I came up with a silky coconut chocolate sauce that you can keep in the fridge to drizzle over juicy, ripe fruit.

As a bonus, these snacks are quick to make and store well. With a variety of healthful munchies tucked away in my pantry, refrigerator, and freezer, I'm ready when the most vicious snack attack sends me in search of a bite.

Caramel Popcorn

MAKES 5 CUPS

Three kinds of syrup give this caramel corn genuine Cracker Jack flavor. Cook the popcorn on a baking sheet with a rim to prevent the bubbling syrup from spilling over as you stir it with the popcorn.

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup rice syrup
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup barley malt syrup
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup maple syrup
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup popcorn, popped (makes 8 cups)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup skinned, unroasted peanuts (4 $\frac{1}{2}$ ounces)

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 375 degrees.

2. Whisk rice syrup, barley malt, and maple syrup together in small bowl. Toss popcorn with salt and peanuts in large bowl. Pour syrups over popcorn and stir to coat evenly. Spread coated popcorn on parchment-covered baking sheet.

3. Bake, stirring well every 5 minutes, until the popcorn is well coated and golden brown, about 15 minutes. (Work carefully because syrup will be bubbly and hot.)

4. Remove baking sheet from oven and let stand until popcorn is slightly cooled but still sticky, about 10 minutes. Tear into clumps and place in bowl. Refrigerate.



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erate until crisp, 10 to 15 minutes. (Popcorn can be stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks.)

PER ½ CUP SERVING: 154 CALORIES, 4 G PROTEIN, 6 G FAT, 1 G SATURATED FAT, 24 G CARBOHYDRATES, 2 G FIBER, 110 MG SODIUM, 2% CALCIUM

Creamy Onion Dip

MAKES ABOUT 1 CUP

Dried onion flakes, sold as instant minced onion in the spice department, are browned and crisped to give this dip authentic flavor. Serve the dip with chips or crudité's or slather it onto a baked potato.

- 6 ounces firm silken tofu
- 1 teaspoon brown rice vinegar
- 1 teaspoon granulated cane juice (like Sucanat)
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 1 tablespoon dried onion
- 1 tablespoon minced shallots

1. Place tofu, vinegar, granulated cane juice, and salt in food processor fitted with metal blade and process to combine.

2. Warm oil in small skillet over medium heat. Add dried onion and sauté it until golden, about 1 minute. Immediately transfer onion to food processor. Add shallots and process to combine. Transfer mixture to small bowl and refrigerate 20 minutes to marry flavors. (Dip can be covered and refrigerated for several days.)

PER TABLESPOON: 24 CALORIES, 1 G PROTEIN, 2 G FAT, <1 G SATURATED FAT, 1 G CARBOHYDRATES, <1 G FIBER, 70 MG SODIUM, <1% CALCIUM

Chocolate Fruit Treats

SERVES 6

This chocolate sauce takes just minutes to put together. If you like, make extra and keep it on hand for up to a week to drizzle over your favorite fruit. The sauce thickens in the refrigerator so you might have to warm it to make it thin enough to pour.

- ½ cup reduced-fat coconut milk
- 1 tablespoon granulated cane juice (like Sucanat)
- ½ cup semisweet chocolate chips

- 3 ripe bananas, peeled and cut diagonally into ¾-inch chunks
- 2 pints strawberries, stemmed and quartered
- ⅓ cup unsweetened shredded coconut

1. Heat coconut milk and granulated cane juice in small saucepan until boiling. Remove from heat and add chocolate chips. Cover and let stand for 3 minutes. Uncover and whisk until smooth. Transfer sauce to bowl and refrigerate until cooled and thickened, at least 15 minutes. (Sauce can be covered and refrigerated for up to 1 week.)

2. Divide bananas and strawberries among 6 bowls. Drizzle some chocolate sauce over each portion. Sprinkle each with shredded coconut and serve immediately.

PER SERVING: 259 CALORIES, 3 G PROTEIN, 13 G FAT, 9 G SATURATED FAT, 37 G CARBOHYDRATES, 7 G FIBER, 8 MG SODIUM, 4% CALCIUM

Puffed Rice Squares

MAKES 16 2 X 2-INCH SQUARES

These chewy squares are best when stored in freezer bags and eaten directly from the freezer. You can keep them at room temperature, but the texture will be very soft. The flavor of the squares varies according to the type of chocolate chip you use. I especially like the rich, deep flavor of Tropical Source Espresso Roast chocolate chips.

Canola oil

- 3 cups unsweetened puffed rice cereal
- ¾ cup chocolate chips
- 6 tablespoons pecans, chopped
- 6 tablespoons rice syrup
- 6 tablespoons maple syrup
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1. Lightly oil an 8-inch-square baking dish.

2. Mix puffed rice, chocolate chips, and pecans in medium bowl. Heat

rice syrup and maple syrup together in a small saucepan just until syrups reach a boil. Remove pan from heat and stir in vanilla. Pour



Chocolate chips add a rich flavor to puffed rice squares.

CHOCOLATE CHIPS: STEVEN MARK NEEDHAM/FOODPIX

liquid over puffed rice mixture and mix until chips are melted and rice is thoroughly coated.

3. Press mixture evenly into prepared baking dish. Refrigerate until cool and firm, at least 1 hour. Cut into 16 squares. Freeze in zipper-lock plastic bag for up to 1 month.

PER SERVING: 104 CALORIES, 1 G PROTEIN, 4 G FAT, 2 G SATURATED FAT, 17 G CARBOHYDRATES, <1 G FIBER, 1 MG SODIUM, 1% CALCIUM

Granola Bars

MAKES 8 2 X 4-INCH BARS

These hearty snack bars are suitable for a quick breakfast on the run. Vary the bars by substituting your favorite nuts or dried fruits for the ones suggested here. You can use equal amounts of other nut butters or dried fruit purées as a replacement for the almond butter.

Granola Bars get fiber and a hearty flavor from oats.



Canola oil

- ¼ cup whole, unblanched almonds
- 1 cup rolled oats
- ⅓ cup whole-wheat pastry flour
- ¼ cup sunflower seeds
- ¼ cup currants
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 2 tablespoons granulated cane juice (like Sucanat)
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ cup almond butter
- ½ cup maple syrup
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ¼ cup apple juice

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly oil an 8-inch-square baking pan. Toast almonds in heavy skillet over medium heat, stirring frequently, until fragrant, about 3 minutes. Cool and then chop coarsely.

2. Stir almonds, oats, flour, sunflower seeds, currants, cinnamon, granulated cane juice, and salt together in medium bowl.

3. Whisk together almond butter, maple syrup, vanilla, and juice in another bowl. Pour wet ingredients over dry and stir until dry ingredients are thoroughly moistened.

4. Press mixture evenly into the prepared

ROLLED OATS: EVAN SKLAR/FODDPIX



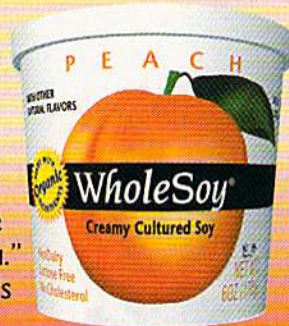
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baking dish. Bake for 25 minutes. Remove pan from oven and cut mixture into 8 bars. Return pan to oven and bake until bars are golden brown, 10 to 15 minutes longer. Cool pan on rack for 10 minutes. Remove bars from pan with spatula and let them cool completely on rack, at least 30 minutes. (Bars can be stored in an airtight container at room temperature for 1 week or in the freezer for 1 month.)

PER SERVING: 243 CALORIES, 6 G PROTEIN, 10 G FAT, 1 G SATURATED FAT, 35 G CARBOHYDRATES, 3 G FIBER, 72 MG SODIUM, 6% CALCIUM

Roasted Chickpea Nuts

MAKES 3/4 CUP

This snack has a sneaky way of disappearing off the baking tray, so you might want to double the recipe. Vary the flavor by adding 2 teaspoons of curry powder, ground cumin, or chile powder, or sprinkle the chickpeas with cayenne for extra bite. Use a baking sheet with a rim, so the chickpeas won't roll off. They're best eaten hot or warm; at room temperature, they're still delicious but not as crisp. If you want to make them in advance, you can reheat them in a baking dish before serving.

- 1 15-ounce can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- Salt

Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 375 degrees. Toss chickpeas, oil, lemon juice, and 1/2 teaspoon salt in medium bowl. Spread on parchment-covered baking sheet and roast, stirring 2 or 3 times, until chickpeas are shrunken and browned, about 45 minutes. Remove from oven and sprinkle lightly with more salt. Pour into bowl and serve.

PER SERVING (ABOUT 3 TABLESPOONS): 129 CALORIES, 6 G PROTEIN, 5 G FAT, 1 G SATURATED FAT, 16 G CARBOHYDRATES, 4 G FIBER, 8 MG SODIUM, 5% CALCIUM

Myra Kornfeld created innovative vegan cuisine at Angelica Kitchen in New York City for six years. She is currently an instructor at the Natural Gourmet Cookery School. She is the author of The Voluptuous Vegan (Clarkson Potter, 2000).

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