

Homemade Caramel Corn

12 cups freshly popped popcorn (about 1 cup kernels before popped)
1/2 cup unsalted butter
1 cup light brown sugar, packed
1/4 cup light or dark corn syrup
1 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 300 degrees F. Line two rimmed baking sheets or roasting pans with aluminum foil, and grease with cooking spray. Begin popping popcorn.

Melt butter in a large pot over medium-high heat. Add brown sugar and corn syrup, stir to combine. Bring to a rolling boil, then reduce the heat to low and let simmer undisturbed for 5 minutes. Stir, then continue to cook for an additional 4 to 6 minutes, stirring every 30 seconds, until the mixture is a deep golden color. Turn off the heat and slowly whisk in salt, baking soda and vanilla.

Pour caramel over the popcorn and toss until it is evenly coated with the caramel, being sure to scrape the caramel off the bottom of the pot. Spread the mixture onto the prepared baking sheets or pans in an even layer.

Bake for 15 to 20 minutes, stirring every 5 minutes, until the caramel corn has turned a deep amber color. Remove the caramel corn from the oven and transfer to a surface covered with parchment or wax paper to cool (or lift the foil out of the pans and place it on the counter). Once it reaches room temperature, use your hands or a spoon to break up the caramel corn, then store in an airtight container for up to a week.