



Nicholas Rizzo's Best Home Movie Popcorn

The reason I like this recipe is that the butter spray distributes the butter flavor really, really well, much better and healthier than dribbling real butter from a cup. And it tastes very good. The extra fine salt tastes great and sticks to the popcorn better than regular salt. The best part about it is that it's healthier. It's lower in salt than when using regular salt, it has ZERO trans fats, and it's freshly popped. Also, it takes about a minute less time than microwaving popcorn.

1/2 Cup Yellow popcorn

2 Tablespoons Vegetable or Peanut oil -- If using a lot of butter or butter spray, I would recommend plain vegetable or canola oil -- it's light and works well. If not using much butter or butter flavor, then I would recommend the peanut oil to add a hint of added flavor.

One alternative is to make your own "popcorn oil" by using half peanut and have vegetable oils. The store bought butter flavor popcorn oils are good also, but I don't think their flavor justifies their expense. (And by the way, cooking the kernels in butter adds a bitter, burnt taste. Save the butter for the topping. The vegetable oils stay clarified during the cooking and don't burn.)

Note: theaters often use coconut oil or artificial oils which are terribly high in bad fats, although it provides that wonderful "movie popcorn smell" in order to sell more.

"I Can't Believe It's Not Butter" spray – a few sprays to taste. The brand name here is preferable.

A Pinch of Kosher Salt – Use this instead of the iodinated table salt for a purer salt taste. Place some salt in a coffee grinder and pulse for just a few seconds. This makes it into a very fine "popcorn salt" that is fine enough to stick to the popcorn instead of bouncing off the kernels like larger grains of salt. I usually do a few tablespoons at a time and keep it in a separate salt shaker just for popcorn. (Alternatively, you can buy it pre-ground from www.yoderpopcorn.com or other sites, but that's a bit pricier just for a simple grind and yellow food coloring.)

Use a large, heavy pot with a big base such as a heavy stock pot. Start with the flame over medium heat, and place two to five test kernels in the pot. When they pop, you know the oil is at the right temperature. Then remove the pot from the heat and pour in the rest of the popcorn, cover, and let it rest off of the heat for sixty seconds (use a timer if possible). This allows the kernels to heat up to nearly the right temperature for popping all together. Then replace the pan on the heat at medium flame and pop. Shake the pan occasionally. You'll notice that the popcorn pops fully and nearly all at once.

Pour the popcorn into a large bowl. Sprinkle with a pinch or two of the extra fine salt -- you only need a surprisingly small amount of salt as this extra fine salt goes a long way. (Sprinkle the salt before adding the butter flavor; otherwise it will clump to the butter and not distribute evenly.) Spray the top with the "I Can't Believe It's Not Butter" spray. Toss the popcorn a few times between sprays to get a nice, even distribution of the butter spray.