Flavor of the Week

Popcorn!

Turns out popcorn's just as much fun to cook with as it is to munch on at the movies! Try it mixed in soups, casseroles and mac 'n cheese or layered with caramel sauce in a sundae. Need an instant fix? Look for delicious new flavored popcorns and just-for-popcorn seasonings at the supermarket!

Enjoy popcorn this week!

- Make caramel-corn cupcakes! Sweet-and-salty caramel popcorn is the perfect accent for a frosted cupcake!
- Try it on soup! Popcorn is a trendy topping for soup, chowder and chili. For example, Emeril Lagasse puts chili-dusted popcorn on his beer-and-cheese soup!
- Amp up your sweet potatoes! Grab caramel corn, picking out any hard single kernels, and spread on top of mashed sweet potatoes before baking.
- Add crunch to mac 'n cheese! Five minutes before you take baked pasta out of the oven, sprinkle it with salted popcorn!
- Wow party guests! Set up a popcorn "bar" so guests can spoon on different toppings, such as oregano, garlic salt, minced sun-dried tomatoes and toasted pine nuts.

Then there's fried... Try Orville Redenbacher's Lime + Salt or Black Pepper, $3 each.

Shake on flavor! Kernel Season's popcorn toppings include white Cheddar, $2.

Sweet tooth? Try Cupcake, Rocky Road or Cinnamon Bun popcorn! $47 for 76 oz. at Popcornopolis.com.

-Katie Alberts

Photo: Laurie Proffitt/Popcorn Board; Xiaolu Hou/Getty Images; courtesy of Michael Chiarello.com; courtesy of vendors (3).

Popcorn Fudge

Line 9"x13" pan with foil; set aside. Melt 1 (18 oz.) package semisweet chocolate chips with 1 (14 oz.) can sweetened condensed milk and 2 Tbs. butter in large saucepan, stirring until smooth; remove from heat. Stir in 4 cups popped popcorn, 1 cup toasted slivered almonds and 1 tsp. vanilla. Spread mixture evenly in prepared pan, chill 2 hours or until firm. Remove from pan and cut into squares. Yield: 32 squares.

Shop Smart!

You deserve the best...Skinny Chip!

If you want...

Tart & tangy zip: Kettle Brand Baked Potato Chips, Sea Salt & Vinegar

"Deliciously authentic!" That's how Fiona Haynes, About.com guide to Low-Fat Cooking, describes these baked chips. "They're made with real potatoes, sunflower oil, sea salt and vinegar—simple, natural ingredients that add up to tart, tangy flavor. And for a chip with 65% less fat than regular chips, they taste remarkably good."

$3.79

Lighter-than-air yum: Popchips Original Potato

"The next best thing to making my own chips? Munching on these!" says Toby Amidor, M.S., R.D., C.D.N., nutrition expert for FoodNetwork.com. "They aren't fried or baked—they're popped using heat and pressure." The result: "A three-ounce serving (about 23 chips) contains just 120 calories and 4 grams of fat. I just love how light and crispy they are!"

$2.99

A classic crowd-pleaser: Baked! Ruffles Original Potato Crisps

For snack reviewer Jim Peoples (Food.com), the only thing better than a classic snack is a delicious twist on a classic: "Ruffles is a great, traditional chip," he declares. "And the baked version is great because you get all the potato flavor you love without any greasiness to obscure it. This is a tasty, healthy chip everyone will love!"

$3.69

To get your dip on: Dutch Gourmet Sea Salt Chips

"The thick texture of these chips makes them great for dipping," notes reviewer Sara Keeny (ChipDipper.wordpress.com). "Their crunch factor and light saltiness is a happy melody of yummy and healthy. And since they're low in saturated fat, they won't send your cholesterol through the roof. One more thing: They taste so good with French onion dip!"

$3.99 at OldDutch. BobsProduce.com

A nutritious tortilla chip: Food Should Taste Good Blue Corn Chips

These tortilla chips boast a boatload of nutrition, says Keeny. "They're made from organic blue corn, oat fiber and brown rice—but it's the flaxseeds that really caught my health-conscious attention." Bonus: "They make great crackers!"

$3.29

Photos: iStockphoto; courtesy of vendors (5).