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FOOD TRENDS POPCORN

People Judge Me Because I Hate Popcorn

It's a movie theater classic, but I give it two thumbs down.



SWEET! THESE 12 FOODS WILL GIVE YOU A FLATTER

STOMACH...



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As a consummate consumer of carbohydrates of all sorts, there is one I can not abide: popcorn. Seriously. I find it totally disgusting. It's like eating salted cardboard. Just the smell of it makes me cringe, and not just because I used to have a co-worker who frequently burned it in the microwave, which made the office smell like a filthy movie theater.

THE MIX

This is not something I tell new friends or casual acquaintances. It's not exactly a fun fact. I mean, what kind of uptight, stuffy, persnickety person doesn't like a big tub of fluffy popcorn? It's the stuff of carnivals and date nights and good times with friends. It's quintessential Americana. What the hell is wrong with me?

I can't blame my upbringing—my mom loves popcorn. She's a great mother, so there were no transgressions during my childhood that would explain my aversion to popcorn as a response to her adoration. She used to make it all the time when I was a kid, and I'm not talking about the microwaveable crap. We had a neat-o popcorn maker, a Cuisinart that even then I thought made at best, popcorn that was bland, and, at worst, just a bunch of half-popped kernels that got wedged between my teeth.

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Whenever friends offer me some from their bucket, I politely decline. I'm not a germaphobe, but the thought of lots of hands reaching into the same close quarters of a container to grasp at buttery pieces just doesn't appeal to me. At the movies, I opt for my beloved Junior Mints. Even hard and stale (as the boxes sold in theaters often are), I will take their cool, sweet, velvety taste over papery popcorn any day.

My dislike of popcorn makes no sense. I love bread. Any bread. Just thinking about a hard, dry sourdough crust makes my mouth water. I even like crackers. Bring on the saltines. (The similarly chalky texture of crackers that dries out my mouth is palatable, even enjoyable, especially with water or soup.)

I've tried to like popcorn. Really, I have. Growing up, I loved the holidays, when family friends would send my parents massive, beautiful tins of flavored popcorn. I adored how festive those barrels of mirth, decorated with appropriate winter wonderland scenes looked. They usually had a divider inside and the popcorn often came in three flavors: plain (maybe with butter and salted), cheddar (or some

other cheesy inspiration) and caramel. The caramel coated pieces were actually edible, especially if drizzled in a substantial amount of chocolate.

I confess that as a little girl, I loved opening a Cracker Jack box. But I was far less interested in the food and desperate to reach the secret toy surprise at the bottom. Dumping the sweetened popcorn on the counter, I prayed for the best prize. I coveted the temporary butterfly tattoo.

As an adult, for a brief period, I tolerated, even enjoyed, fresh kettle corn. It's certainly tastier than plain popcorn, and its slightly salty-sweet flavor appeals more to my tongue. But it's still something I only eat under mitigating circumstances, like being hungry and stuck at a crowded venue where the other concessions are sold out.

When I was in college there was always a party or movie night where popcorn abounded. (Well, that and beer.) And why not? Popcorn is cheap and most people love it. One of my pals noticed that I always passed the bowl to the next person and didn't even look down at it.

"You don't like popcorn, do you?" she asked.

"Oh sure, I do," I said.

She stared at me until I cracked a smile.

I continued, "I just have to be in the mood for it, which I never am."

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