

Homemade Cracker Jacks



Fresh popped popcorn, almonds and a homemade caramel

Serves 12

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| 3 ~ 3.5oz bags natural microwave popcorn | 1c sugar | 1t almond extract |
| 2c almonds | 1/2c corn syrup | 1/2t cinnamon |
| 1c heavy cream | 2T butter | 1/2t cayenne pepper |
| | 1/4t salt | |

Pop the popcorn according to package instructions. While hot, carefully open package and pour into a large bowl. Add almonds to the popcorn.

Make caramel: Warm the cream over low heat and keep warm while you cook the sugar. Put the sugar and corn syrup and in a deep, heavy-bottomed large saucepan. Cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally until the sugar dissolves. Stop stirring, raise heat to medium-high, and simmer until the sugar reaches the hard crack stage, or 305 degrees F on a candy thermometer, about 7 minutes.

Whisk the butter and salt into the sugar mixture. Gradually pour in the cream and vanilla taking care since the mixture will bubble up. Reduce the heat to medium and continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until the sugar reaches soft ball stage, 240 degrees F on the thermometer, about 5 minutes more. Immediately remove from the heat and stir in the cinnamon and cayenne. Cool for about a minute. Pour caramel over the popcorn and stir to evenly coat.

Prepare Ahead Tip

Store, covered, at room temperature for up to one week.

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