

## Popcorn Trivia

- January 19 is National Popcorn Day.
- The highest popcorn "pop" on record is 3 feet in the air.
- The ancient way to pop corn was to heat sand in a fire and stir kernels of popcorn in when the sand was fully heated.
- Some Native American tribes popped corn right on the cob, by spearing the corn cob with a stick and holding it near the fire. The kernels would pop and stay attached to the cob.



## Did You Know...?

- One corn seed can produce a corn plant that will grow 7 to 10 feet tall.
- One corn plant can produce between 600 and 1,000 seeds like the one from which the plant started.
- Varieties of popcorn are grown to pop into two distinctive shapes: "snowflake," the large popcorn sold in theaters and ball parks; and "mushroom," the smaller variety used in popcorn candies and snacks.
- Corn is an ingredient in more than 3,000 grocery products.



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## Joke Time

1. What did Baby Corn say to Mama Corn?
2. What do you call a corn cob with only one kernel?



## Joke Answer:

1. Where's Pop Corn?
2. A unicorn

## Links to Agriculture Popping for Corn



Farmers in the United States grow more than 90 million acres of corn each year. There are different kinds of corn grown. **Field corn** is the one you commonly see growing in fields. It is mainly used as feed for livestock but is also used to make corn chips and corn flour. **Sweet corn** has a higher sugar content than field corn and is the one people usually eat. **Popcorn** is a unique type of corn which we commonly eat as a snack. Popcorn has been around for a very long time. The Native Americans shared it with the settlers during the first Thanksgiving!



Popcorn is a healthy snack. It is a whole grain which makes it high in fiber. This makes you feel full longer. It is also low in calories. Besides being a great snack, popcorn has some unusual characteristics. Did you ever wonder why the popcorn kernels pop when they are heated? Each kernel contains moisture. When the kernel is heated the moisture inside expands. When the kernel can't stand any more pressure, it explodes through the hard, outer shell.

Today, part of the United States is called the **Corn Belt**. The Corn Belt is a group of states where most of our corn is grown. Four states - *Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, and Minnesota* - produce 50 percent of all the corn grown in the U.S. Other major corn growing states include Indiana, South Dakota, Kansas, Missouri, and Ohio.



## How Well Did You Read?

1. Compare and contrast **field corn** and **sweet corn**.

How are they alike and different?

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2. Why is popcorn considered a healthy snack?

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3. What causes the moisture inside of a popcorn kernel to expand?

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4. What is the **corn belt**?

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5. Where in the United States is the corn belt located?

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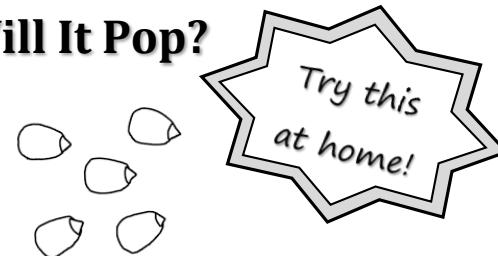
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## Experiment: Will It Pop?

### Materials:

- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of un-popped popcorn
- 3 paper bags



### Procedures:

1. Prepare three different samples of popcorn.  
**Sample A:** Bake  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of popcorn in an oven set to 200° for 60 minutes.  
**Sample B:** Soak  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of popcorn in water for 60 minutes and allow to dry overnight.  
**Sample C:** Do not do anything to the remaining  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of popcorn.
2. Take three brown lunch bags and label them A, B, and C to match your popcorn samples.
3. Put 15 kernels from each treatment group into the correct bag.
4. Pop each bag in a microwave for the same number of minutes (with the assistance of an adult).
5. Examine your popped corn and fill in the table below to describe your findings.

### Results

	Bag A	Bag B	Bag C
<b>Most Popped Kernels</b>			
<b>Fewest Popped Kernels</b>			
<b>Most Un-Popped Kernels</b>			
<b>Largest, Fluffiest Kernels</b>			

- Which sample had the most popped kernels? \_\_\_\_\_
- Which had the fewest popped kernels? \_\_\_\_\_
- Which had the largest, fluffiest kernels? \_\_\_\_\_



### Conclusions

Analyze the data to decide what was done to the popcorn that had the largest kernels and the smallest kernels. Complete the sentences.

The largest kernels \_\_\_\_\_

The smallest kernels \_\_\_\_\_