



# LESSON PLAN FOR SPICED SMOKEY POPCORN

KEY STAGE 2 & 3

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[SPICED POPCORN](#)

## ***Topic***

Nutritional properties (sweetcorn), functional properties (sweetcorn), temperature (sweetcorn), social and environmental issues (sweetcorn), food packaging and labelling (sweetcorn) system and procedures of a food product and food product development. (Sweetcorn)

## ***Aims***

- To investigate the properties of sweetcorn and its role in cooking.
- Learning and mastering the following cooking skills, weighing and measuring, heating a pan and heating oil, mixing, shaking a hot pan, presentation and decoration and composting.

## ***Level***

Key stage 2 & 3.

## ***Time***

The lesson before the students write their shopping list, prep list, equipment list, time line of work, presentation ideas etc. 60 minutes to make. Make and present in one practical lesson. Adapt and make again. Remember this means you can focus on different areas on different lessons. For example discuss the farming around sweetcorn in one lesson and the other nutritional analysis and cost the dish, compared to competitors. Also think about how it could be marketed.

## ***Materials***

All ingredients x 2 one for student one for teacher to demonstrate.

6tbsp vegetable oil

100g popping corn

1tbsp vegetable oil

½ tsp smoked paprika sweet or hot

1tbsp cumin seeds

1tbsp fennel seeds

Sea salt to taste (optional)

Olive oil to taste

Flash cards for sweetcorn, peppers drying, cumin seeds, fennel seeds, olive trees. Show how they grow, where they grow and the seasonality of them.

## ***Equipment***

Large saucepan with tight fitting lid

Small glass bowl

Tbsp.

Large serving spoon

Serving bowl for presenting the dish.

## ***Introduction***

In this lesson the children will be learning the following skills;

- Weighing and measuring
- heating a pan and heating oil
- Mixing
- Shaking a hot pan
- Presentation and decoration
- Composting.

## ***Procedure***

- See recipe for method.
- Make sure you clean all the environment before cooking
- Make sure the children wash their hands, put on an apron, tie their hair back and remove nail varnish.
- Teach the children to wash up correctly. Making sure all high risk equipment is washed thoroughly.

## ***Follow up tasks***

- Adding different ingredients you could do a whole project on sweetcorn from growing it to harvesting it and then cooking a range of ingredients using different stages of the sweetcorn. Like fresh or ground frozen.

## **Health and safety**

- Using the hob. When using the hob make sure they are aware of the open fire, if you are using gas. In schools you might have electric or induction hobs. When you demonstrate you will continually making them aware of the heat and the danger of getting burnt. Also when you shake the saucepan to encourage the popcorn to pop use a t-towel to hold the lid and make sure the handle is not hot.
- Hot oil. You need to take the oil to quite a hot temperature before you add the popcorn and you need to place the lid on quickly before it starts to pop. Make the students aware that the fat could spit at them and burn.
- It can be very exciting to pop your own popcorn and the students will be “giddy” try and keep the environment calm especially when cooking so silly mistakes are not made. They need to be sensible while cooking.

## **Healthy eating messages**

- I recommend you make or buy some flash cards of corn kernels, peppers, cumin seeds, fennel seeds and sea salt.
- Eat as part of a balanced diet. This popcorn recipe does not contain sugar but lots of recipes do. Using sugar make the connection between tooth decay and

weight gain and take about sugar swaps in others areas of their diet. It would be a good opportunity to talk to the children about fizzy drinks and energy drinks which are high in sugar. Teach them the dangers of blood sugar levels dropping and rising the link to the risks of diabetes. The direct connection to tooth decay and children having to have teeth removed from an early age because of the amount of sugar eaten. Sugar can contribute to weight gain an in turn lead to heart conditions.

- If popcorn is popped using a little oil it is very low calories, high in fibre which can prevent constipation. Said to be anti-oxidant which can help prevent cancer. It is a whole grain food and it has traces of vitamins and minerals in it. It is also a carbohydrate which gives you energy and has no saturated or Trans fats in it.
- If you are using salt teach the students the different types, see notes below. But also talk about the link to increasing blood pressure which can then lead on to heart disease and strokes. Also talk about the hidden salt in food, so which food and drinks (they will be shocked to learn) bread, cereals etc. Young people shouldn't have more than 6g a day, children over 11 years old. Tell them which foods are high in salt and give them a challenge to reduce their intake.

## **Skills**

- Weighing and measuring and making does not have to be done in all one lesson. Using balance scales or electric scales. Also used spoon measurements to measure the spices. Electric scales are better at key stage 3 as they are more accurate than balance scales, although balance scales may be the only option in schools. Measuring spoons are essential for measuring the spices and the optional salt.
- Heating a saucepan, heating oil, cooking popcorn in oil and controlling the pan when shaking it. See above for safety notes.
- Mixing the spices. Hold the side of the bowl while mixing.

## Ingredients and cultural diversity

- Corn kernels. History of corn, it was mentioned in the bible and first seen in South America. The students can research the history of corn and how and when it was first popped. Sweetcorn kernels are used all over the world and is often eaten sweet or salty. This recipe includes different spices from around the world.
- Vegetable oil. Talk about the process of making vegetable oil, what is used and what equipment is used. It would be a great opportunity to talk about oils in general. What types of oils can you purchase, what are their different roles in cooking, flavour profile. For example oil is added to bread for flavour not for any other reason. Flavourless oils like sunflower, vegetable, rapeseed and

grapeseed oils can reach a high temperature, therefore they are good for frying, deep frying etc. Olive oils don't reach the same temperature, but is used for shallow frying. Extra virgin olive oil is used for dressing and is not used in cooking. You could do experiments using different oils for different jobs and see if they effect taste, texture the overall finish of the dish. Use a recipe where the oil is predominate. Linking to culture the role of oil in different cultures, what oil is used and why? Very basis, olive oil is used in countries where olives are grown. Vegetable/sunflower oil is used in countries where olives do not grow.

- Smoked paprika hot or sweet. Paprika is made from dried peppers and to change from sweet to hot is whether or not the seeds are removed. The peppers are smoked over coal to obtain the smoky flavour. Picante means hot, if you see this on the label.
- Cumin and fennel seeds. They have been used in preservation for many years. Different cultures produce their own spice mixes to which are native to their families. Jerk seasoning is a mix of spices originating in Jamaica. Garam masala is a spice mix from Indian/Pakistan. Black pepper was the most popular/important spice to have in the UK at one point.
- When teaching with spices buy the whole spices//plant the spice if from and show the children in its purest form. If you can dry fry the spices whole and grind them in a pestle and mortar. The children love to pound the seeds, it's a good stress/anxiety release. You could buy a spice tin from an Asian store they are quite cheap and keep your spices in that, they will last longer.
- Sea salt. Teach the children about seasoning. What does it mean and what do we use to season our foods. It's not only salt and pepper that is used but vinegar, lemon juice etc. These are often added at the end of cooking to season a dish. The amount of salt that we should be eaten is a great topic to pick up on. The originals of using salt, hot it was used and still is used in preservation techniques. There are two types of salt that are commonly used. Fine salt, which has been highly processed and is used in cooking where to salt needs to blend or mix into something, like when making pasta. Also there is a sea salt. This is a natural sea salt that comes straight from the sea bed, it is courser, bigger flakes, and when used needs to be ground in your fingers. I recommend you teach the students to stick to sea salt rather than the fine salt, although fine salt is cheaper you will use more than if you purchase sea salt. Too more salt is bad for your heart.

### ***Provenance and sustainability***

- Corn kernels. Sweetcorn is grown all around the world. We can grow it in this country. Show a picture to the students of how it grows. They might have seen it growing in the fields. If you do have some outside space, you could try growing sweetcorn from seed. It is a sustainable plant and is used all over the world.

- Spices; Archaeologists discovered spices in the Egyptian tombs as early as 3000 BC. You could make this recipe if studying Egypt in school. Spices were original sort after for the use in medicine. Lots of cultures still believe in their healing qualities. Turmeric is often use to stop the blood flow and help clotting.
- Spices are sustainable. Could talk about the spice trade. How it effects financial economies of countries and trade agreements in place.

## **Links to the key stage 3 National Curriculum**

### ***Cooking and nutrition***

- As part of their work with food, pupils should be taught how to cook and apply the principles of nutrition and healthy eating. Instilling a love of cooking in pupils will also open a door to one of the great expressions of human creativity. Learning how to cook is a crucial life skill that enables pupils to feed themselves and others affordably and well, now and in later life.
- Teaching the children a love of food can be taught but it also comes from deep inside. Encouraging creatively in cooking helps instil a love of food. Create a “creativity” tray within the classroom where you have a selection of dried and fresh herbs and spices and any other store cupboard ingredients. This is there every practical food lesson and encouraged to use it.

- Passionate teaching leads to passionate students, they will take your lead on how you feel about cooking and eating. Remember if you have dislikes and voice them they might take them on.
- Educating them that cooking is a life skill and will be able to take control of their own diets when they have the skills to cook for life and look after their families.
- The art of eating on a budget is just that! It is difficult to eat healthy on a budget but you can teach the children how to do this well. Encourage the use of frozen and tinned vegetables and fruit. Remember to only use tinned vegetables in water and tinned fruit in fruit juice not syrup. Teach them to combine frozen, tinned and fresh fruit and vegetables in order to stick to a budget and also benefit nutritional. Remember frozen can be just as good if not better than some fresh produce.

***Pupils should be taught to:***

- Understand and apply the principles of nutrition and health.
- In everything you teach you will be talking about nutrition and health and always linking it to a healthy lifestyle in conjunction with exercise.
- Cook a repertoire of predominantly savoury dishes so that they are able to feed themselves and others a healthy and varied diet become competent in a range of cooking techniques [for example, selecting and preparing ingredients; using utensils and electrical equipment; applying heat in different ways; using awareness of taste, texture and smell to decide how to season dishes and combine ingredients; adapting and using their own recipes.
- Stick to savoury dishes and sweet on occasions. This is really important, we are trying to teach the children how to look after themselves so savoury dishes are imperative. If you are cooking something sweet try and include fruit or vegetables into the recipe, which will increase the nutritional content in the recipe. Talk to the children about no foods are forbidden just all in moderation and it's about healthy choices. There are times for unhealthy foods and times to think about what you are eating. Use fizzy drinks as an example as these are used by teenagers nationwide. They are high in sugar and often colouring and preservatives. They are very damaging to their health. They can increase blood sugar levels and give massive highs and lows. They also can contribute to weight gain. If consumed in large amounts for a sustainable period of time along with other sugary foods they could cause diabetes. Also an increase in weight gain can cause heart disease in later life. You could buy a similar products from different supermarkets and compare the nutritional content and price. You can buy computer software that will work out the nutritional content of this nougat recipe. It will show the nutritional and cost benefit of making your own food from scratch.
- Different cooking techniques. There are many cooking techniques to be taught and new ones come along very quickly. Sous vide cooking, using chemicals in cooking etc.

- Using all our senses. While you are demonstrating and teaching you will be using all your senses, teach this to your children. What things smell like before cooking, while cooking and once cooked? Taste the food at all stages, taste, taste, taste and more taste. It is important for you and them to continually taste while cooking at once finished. You're checking for flavour profile of the dish, sweet, salty, sharp etc. What does the dish need more of something, else of smoothing else etc. Get the children in the habit of using teaspoons to taste and NOT DOUBLE DIPPING! Texture of a dish how most incredible plates of food have something soft on the plate or sauce or puree, a crunch and a dusting or sprinkle of something as an equation they can create from this. Texture is very important when we eat the crunch of something or the softness can influence how we feel about a dish.
- Adapting and creating recipes. Encourage the children to work from recipes that exist until they are confident to adapt. Guide them on this task as they can be tempted to move towards sweet cooking, or taking a savoury recipe and including sweet ingredients. Encourage a culture in the classroom of classic dishes and cultural dishes that you don't adapt! Teach them it's about the ingredients and how they choose to cook them. Make small changes and maybe substitute 1 or 2 ingredients first and then go from there. Use reputable recipes not just a recipe off a website. Website can be good for some recipes but have a wide range of cooking books old and new in the classroom and encourage them to read these. Be wary of recipes that are measured in cups as you don't know if they are American or Australia. If you try and convert the measurements they don't always work, they could be setting themselves up for a hard task. Also this will help in their presentation ideas to look at the food styling of certain dishes like theirs. Once they have adapted the recipe make notes and amend and keep all original work sheets. Explain how it has changed the dish and for what reason, what was the changes that we made that effect the dishes flavour, texture, smell and presentation.
- Preparing ingredients. Teach the students good knife skills. The bridge and claw position. Progress onto rolling or rocking the knife keeping the knife on the board when cutting. Rocking backwards and forwards in a smooth motion. Get them in the habit to prepare all ingredients before starting cooking. Also get out and prepare all the equipment. Get the washing up area ready with j cloth and t- towel. It is important to teach them how to work clean and tidy to prevent food positioning through cross-contamination. Make sure they have an order of work, a schedule of work what they will do and at what time. Encourage timers as if they go into the catering industry they are used then. Correct measurements using measuring spoons, making sugar everything is prepared being cooking begins.
- Using utensils and electrical equipment. Teach the correct tool for the correct job. Encourage the use of their hands as they are the best tool for a job sometimes. Safety of using electrical equipment should be taught dry hands

and always turn off. Never place your hand inside a blender and be careful of open blades when washing up. Never place knives in a washing up bowl as someone else could come along and not know they are in there and cut their hand. Allow hot pans to cool before cleaning them.

- Applying heat in different ways. Teaching that placing a lid on top of a pan also creates steam which helps in the speed and the cooking process. Also the lid is on for safety reasons. What happens? And why? And why it changes? Expansion, how do they do this in a factory environment? Why does a combination of the oil and heat cause the kernels to pop? Or is the oil there for another reason?
- Understand the source, seasonality and characteristics of a broad range of ingredients.
- Selecting. It's important to understand seasonality to understand the selection process, especially when it comes to fresh fruit and vegetables. Also game seasons and fishing seasons. They are at their best in season and cheaper. Try and buy British for the economy and keeping people in work. Look for the best quality and what you can afford on your budget. Go to markets and talk to the market staff. Perfect looking is not always better tasting. Think about locality and where the produce is coming from. The implications of air miles and food traveling. How is this good and bad for the economy? Get friendly with your local butcher, fish monger, and grocer and ask what is good at that time. Ask if they know if it is sustainable and ethical and can guarantee quality from a reputable farmer.
- Range of ingredients. Saying what I said before embrace the cultures around you can cook a variety of dishes from around the world. Introduce the students to ingredients and foods they may have never seen before. But don't waste it cook it and ask them to taste it. You could cook their favourite Chinese dish from scratch. Also when something is in season like asparagus or Jersey Royals let the children enjoy them at their best, taste testing. Investigate where in the world smoked paprika is used and in what dishes? They will learn the seasonality of other countries.

### ***Skills the children will be taught through making this recipe.***

- Weighing and measuring.
- Heating a pan and heating oil
- Mixing
- Shaking a hot pan.
- Presentation and decoration
- Composting

## ***Progression of skills/how the recipe could change-***

1. Adding different ingredients. You could do a whole project on sweetcorn from growing it to harvesting it and then cooking a range of ingredients using different stages of the sweetcorn. Like fresh, ground and frozen.

## **The recipe**

### **SPICED POPCORN**

Use a good sized heavy-based saucepan with a tight fitting lid for this recipe. Remove the pan from the heat when the popping has all but stopped. This will make enough to fill two sandwich bags, freshly popped corn is tastier and healthier than any crisps or savoury biscuits and perfect for packed lunches and picnics.

Ingredients;

3 tbsp vegetable oil

50g popping corn

1 tbsp oil or

½ tsp Smoked paprika – hot or sweet as you prefer

1 tsp toasted cumin seeds - ground

1 tsp toasted fennel seeds - ground

Optional; sea salt

Method;

1. Mix together the spices (and salt if using) in a small bowl.
2. Put the pan over a medium heat. Add the oil and 3 individual corn kernels and put on the lid, as soon as the first kernel pops add the rest of the popcorn and put back on the lid.
3. Heat, shaking occasionally, until it starts to pop.
4. Keep the pan lidded without peaking, though you can lift a lid a few millimetres every now and then to see the steam escape from the popcorn. You want the popcorn to pop as quickly as possible and the hot steamy lidded pan helps with this.
5. Once the frantic popping slows to 2-3 seconds between pops, remove from the heat and pour into a large bowl. Remove any unpopped or partially popped kernels you see.
6. Transfer your freshly popped hot popcorn to a large bowl, then add the spice mixture and drizzle the olive oil on top. Toss and shake until the popcorn is evenly coated with spices.

