

Suzy's World

Popcorn - What makes popcorn pop?

Fact

- The water inside the corn kernel needs to reach up to about 200 degrees Celsius when it pops.
- At that temperature the water has become steam, which takes up more room than water so it makes the kernel explode so it can escape.
- When the popcorn explodes it turns inside out so that the hard outer layer is on the inside.
- You need to use a popcorn maker, microwave or a pot with a tight fitting lid.



Do you know

- Popping corn is different from ordinary corn, the kernels are harder and drier.
- Each kernel has a hard, yellow outer layer of starch called pericarp.
- Popcorn is made up of starch, fibre, vitamins and water.
- The white fluffy stuff is the starch that's been cooked by the heat.
- The pericarp is hard fibre and fibre makes your poos float.
- When popcorn explodes it can expand up to 30 or 40 times its original size.
- People have been eating popcorn for about 7000 years.
- The oldest known popcorn was found, still fluffy white in a bag attached to the belt of a mummy in Chile.

Experiments you can do

Get an adult to help you make your own Popcorn.

Have a good look at the popcorn before you try cooking it.

What does it look like, feel like and smell like.

Follow the cooking instructions.

Then when you eat it look at how it has changed; what does it look, feel and smell like now?



Other Investigations

How many other types of food can you name that you eat that have been popped or puffed in a similar way? What sort of grains are they made of?

Jokes

Why don't people tell jokes about popcorn? Because the jokes are so corny!