



CARAMEL CORN WITH CHOCOLATE COVERED ESPRESSO BEANS

Canola oil

1/3 cup unpopped popcorn (I got about 8 cups popped from this)\

1 cup brown sugar

¼ cup pure maple syrup

6 tablespoons unsalted butter

½ teaspoon kosher salt

2 tablespoons water

½ teaspoon baking soda

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

½ cup chocolate covered espresso beans (I used a mix of dark, milk, and white chocolate)

Preheat your oven to 250 degrees and line a baking sheet with parchment paper. First, you'll need to pop your popcorn. Get a really large lidded pot (if it has a glass lid it's even better) and put about 1/8 inch of canola oil into it. Heat the oil over medium-high heat. When one kernel dropped in pops, the oil is ready; pour in the popcorn in a single layer and put the lid on. Shake the pot back and forth while the popcorn pops. Once the kernels stop popping vigorously, take it off the heat. When the popcorn has completely stopped popping, pour it out onto the baking sheet. Measure out the baking soda and vanilla and set aside (they need to be ready to add immediately during the caramel making process).

In a medium saucepan, add the brown sugar, maple syrup, butter, salt, and water and heat, stirring occasionally, over medium-high heat. Simmer the caramel mixture, stirring often, until it reaches 250 degrees on a candy thermometer. Take the pan off the heat, and immediately whisk in the baking soda and vanilla. Then pour the caramel over the popcorn and stir to coat with a rubber spatula, making sure that the popcorn ends up in a single layer on the baking sheet. Bake the popcorn at 250 degrees for an hour, stirring it around every 20 minutes. Let it cool completely, then mix in the chocolate covered espresso beans. Store in an airtight container.

Recipe courtesy of Karly Vardaman, www.kitchenpsycho.com