

# Corn Poppin' Facts

Second and third graders from a Joliet elementary school, along with their teacher, completed a class project attempting to make popcorn the official snack food of the State of Illinois. The General Assembly made that designation official in 2003.

Popcorn pops because water is stored in a small circle of soft starch in each kernel. As the kernel is heated, the water heats, the droplet of moisture turns to steam, and the steam builds up pressure until the kernel finally explodes to many times its original volume.

- ✓ Americans consume 17.3 billion quarts of popped popcorn each year! The average American eats about 68 quarts!
- ✓ While the first breakfast cereal was made by adding sugar and milk to popped popcorn, a shortage of baking flours after World War II forced bread makers to substitute up to 25% of wheat flour with ground popped popcorn. Over the years, popcorn also has been used as an ingredient in pudding, candy, soup, salad and entrees.
- ✓ Popcorn's nutritional value comes from the fact that, like other cereal grains, its primary function is to provide the body with heat and energy.
- ✓ Microwave popcorn is the same as other popcorn except the kernels are usually larger, and the packaging is designed for maximum popability.



Sources: [http://www.agday.org/education/fun\\_facts.php](http://www.agday.org/education/fun_facts.php)  
<http://www.illinois.gov/facts/symbols.cfm>