

Atomic Popcorn Balls

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 5 minutes

Total time: 20 minutes

Oven temperature: n/a

Yield: varies

Difficulty: medium

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons butter, plus a little extra butter or cooking spray
- 2 cups miniature marshmallows
- ½ cup light corn syrup
- A few drops food coloring in two different colors
- 6 heaping cups popped popcorn [IMPORTANT: Remove all unpopped kernels!]
- Optional: ½ cup dried fruit, such as raisins, cherries, etc.

EQUIPMENT

- Cookie sheet or tray
- Medium-sized saucepan
- Wooden spoon or spatula
- Two large mixing bowls
- Toothpicks

METHOD

- 1 Grease a cookie sheet or tray with butter or cooking spray.
- 2 Have an adult help you melt the butter in a medium-sized saucepan on the stove.
- 3 Add the marshmallows and light corn syrup to the butter. Stir constantly until the marshmallows melt.
- 4 Divide the marshmallow mixture into two large bowls. Add a few drops of food coloring to each bowl and mix thoroughly.
- 5 Carefully stir in the popped popcorn—with no unpopped kernels!—into each bowl, three heaping cups in each. If desired, add in the dried fruit now, too. Make sure the popcorn is completely coated with the marshmallow mixture. Allow it to cool slightly. (*Take a deep whiff. What can you say about smell and states of matter?*)
- 6 Spray your clean hands with cooking spray. When the popcorn mixture is cool enough to handle, grab a handful from one of the bowls and form it into a ball. Place the popcorn ball on the greased tray. Repeat until all the popcorn and marshmallow mixture is used up.
- 7 Make “molecules” by using toothpicks to secure the “atoms” together. For example, to make a water molecule, join two similarly colored popcorn balls to one ball of the other color. Presto—you’ve made the world’s first *solid* water molecule!

