

## SPICY CARAMEL BACON POPCORN BALLS

### INGREDIENTS

5-6 slices of bacon  
Nonstick cooking spray  
3 tablespoons vegetable oil  
1/2 cup popcorn kernels  
1 1/2 teaspoon baking soda  
3/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper  
3 cups white granulated sugar  
3 tablespoons unsalted butter  
2 teaspoons fine sea salt

### DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 400F. Line a baking sheet with parchment and lay bacon side-by-side. Transfer baking sheet to hot oven and cook bacon for 15-18 minutes, and until crispy and brown. Remove and place on paper towels to drain. When cool, cut into dice-sized pieces.

Lightly coat two large heatproof rubber spatulas and a large mixing bowl with nonstick cooking spray. In a large saucepan or pot with a lid, heat the vegetable oil over medium-high heat. Add the popcorn kernels, cover, and keep the saucepan moving until all of the kernels have popped, about 4 minutes. Transfer the popped popcorn to the large prepared bowl, removing any unpopped kernels.

In a small bowl, whisk together the baking soda and cayenne pepper. In a medium saucepan, combine the sugar, butter, salt, and 1/2 cup water. Cook over high heat, without stirring, until the mixture becomes a light golden-yellow caramel, about 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and carefully whisk in the baking soda mixture (the mixture will bubble up). Quickly fold in bacon bits. Pour the caramel over the popcorn and toss, like a salad, until all of the popcorn is evenly coated with the caramel.

Pour the popcorn onto a large baking pan and quickly flatten and mold into palm-sized balls while it is still warm. Cool to room temperature, about 30 minutes. Once they are cool, store it in a well-sealed airtight container.