Maple-Mustard Coffee Popcorn Crunch

4 equal gift containers, approximately 80-90 g each after drying; 8 snack portions | Active 25 min | Cook 50 min | Total 110 min

Ingredients

- 60 g plain ready-to-eat popped popcorn, hard kernels removed before weighing
- 100 g ready-to-eat roasted unsalted pumpkin seeds
- 80 g ready-to-eat small plain pretzels
- 90 g maple syrup
- 25 g unsalted butter
- 25 g smooth Dijon mustard
- 2 g plain instant coffee granules
- 2 g fine salt

Set out

Oven with two usable shelves for the stated simultaneous-tray timing, Digital scales, Very large mixing bowl of at least 6 L, Small saucepan, Flexible spatula, Two lined baking trays with usable flat areas of at least 40 × 30 cm, Cooling racks, Four clean airtight gift containers of at least 750 ml each

Allergens

Milk, Wheat, Mustard. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Heat the oven to 265°F (130°C). Line the trays. Weigh the popcorn after checking for and discarding hard unpopped kernels. Put it in the large bowl with the seeds and pretzels.

2. Warm the maple syrup, butter, mustard, instant coffee and salt in the small saucepan over low heat for 2-3 minutes, stirring until the butter has melted and the coffee has dissolved. Do not boil to a candy stage.

3. Drizzle the warm glaze over the dry mixture in three additions, folding gently but thoroughly after each. Spread half on each tray in a loose, shallow layer.

4. Bake for 45 minutes, stirring gently and exchanging the trays every 15 minutes. The coating should lose its wet shine. Cool a small sample for 3 minutes; if sticky rather than crisp, bake 5-10 minutes longer and test again.

5. Cool completely on the trays for about 40 minutes. Break apart loose clusters gently, then weigh and divide the complete cooled batch equally among four containers. Each container holds two snack portions. Close only when cold.

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Bring it

Pack the completely cooled mix in four clean, dry airtight containers, with an ingredient list, baking date and caffeine note. Cushion the containers against crushing. This fully cooled dry mix needs no refrigerated buffet.

Finish at the gathering

Open and serve; no host oven, mixing bowl or additional topping is required. One container makes two modest snack portions.

Make it yours

Give the savory-sweet mix at a winter film night, a housewarming or an all-year games evening. The decaffeinated version keeps the flavor for a later gathering.

Ingredient labels

Butter supplies Milk; pretzels usually supply Wheat; Dijon supplies Mustard. Check pretzel and mustard labels for Soy, Sesame and other additions. Regular instant coffee contributes caffeine; label it for recipients.

A useful detail

The 110-minute plan allows 15 minutes for weighing and coating, 5 for heating the glaze, 45 for oven drying, 40 for cooling and 5 for packing. Stirring during baking brings active work to about 25 minutes. Extended drying adds time; this method does not establish a shelf-stable gift.

Another way

Use 2 g plain decaffeinated instant coffee instead of regular instant coffee. The mustard-maple flavor and count stay the same.

Replace the 100 g pumpkin seeds with 100 g ready-to-eat roasted sunflower kernels; check the replacement label. Do not use raw kernels without their full package cooking instructions.

Keep it well

Keep cold-to-the-touch, fully cooled mix airtight in a cool, dry place for up to 3 days for best crunch. Give it promptly; do not close it warm or promise a long shipping life.