Midnight Snack Cups - Sweet & Salty Party Mix



Easy individual snack cups for a fun New Year's Eve celebration

Keep the midnight munchies simple, colorful, and easy to serve! These individual snack cups are filled with crunchy popcorn, mini pretzels, toasted cereal, dried fruit, and seeds. A light buttery seasoning adds a delicious sweet-and-savory flavor.
They're perfect for guests who want to snack while watching movies, playing games, or waiting for the midnight countdown. No shared serving bowl or complicated preparation needed!

Prep Time: 10 minutes
Bake Time: 5 minutes
Cooling Time: 10 minutes
Total Time: 25 minutes
Yield: 8 snack cups

YOU'LL NEED

- 8 cups plain popped popcorn
- 2 cups mini pretzels
- 1 cup toasted cereal squares
- ½ cup dried cranberries or raisins
- ½ cup roasted peanuts or pumpkin seeds
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted, or coconut oil
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon smoked paprika
- ½ teaspoon salt

Optional Sweet Addition

- ⅓ cup chocolate chips
- 1 tablespoon granulated sugar, if desired

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO

1. Combine the Crunchy Ingredients
Add the popped popcorn, mini pretzels, cereal squares, dried cranberries or raisins, and roasted peanuts or pumpkin seeds to a large mixing bowl. Gently toss to combine.

2. Prepare the Seasoning
In a small bowl, mix the melted butter or coconut oil with cinnamon, smoked paprika, and salt. Stir until evenly combined.

3. Coat the Snack Mix
Pour the seasoned butter mixture over the popcorn mixture. Toss gently with a large spoon until the ingredients are lightly coated.

4. Bake Briefly
Preheat the oven to 300°F (150°C). Spread the mixture in an even layer on a large baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Bake for 5 minutes, stirring once if needed.

5. Cool Completely
Remove the baking sheet from the oven and allow the snack mix to cool completely. This helps the mixture become crisp and prevents the chocolate chips from melting.

6. Add the Chocolate Chips
Once completely cool, gently mix in the chocolate chips if using.

7. Fill the Snack Cups
Divide the mixture evenly among eight paper cups, small jars, or individual serving containers. Arrange them on a tray so guests can easily grab one.

Helpful Tips

- Keep the popcorn crunchy: Make sure the popcorn is completely cooled before mixing and storing.
- Choose plain popcorn: Avoid heavily buttered or flavored popcorn, which can make the mixture too oily.
- Make it sweeter: Add a tablespoon of sugar to the cinnamon seasoning and mix in chocolate chips after cooling.
- Make it savory: Add a little extra smoked paprika, garlic powder, or grated Parmesan before baking.
- Make it nut-free: Replace peanuts with pumpkin or sunflower seeds, and check all ingredient labels for allergy information.
- Create a festive presentation: Use clear cups or small jars and tie them with colorful ribbons or simple New Year's Eve labels.

Make-Ahead Instructions

Prepare the snack mix earlier on the day of your celebration. Allow it to cool completely before dividing it into individual cups.
For the best crunch, store the mix in an airtight container and fill the serving cups shortly before guests arrive. If using chocolate chips, add them only after the mixture has cooled.

Storage

- Room temperature: Store the cooled snack mix in an airtight container in a cool, dry place for up to 3 days.
- Individual cups: Keep them covered or sealed until serving.
- Avoid refrigeration: Refrigeration can introduce moisture and make the popcorn and pretzels lose their crunch.

For the best texture, enjoy the snack mix within a day or two.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can I make these snack cups without baking?
Yes! Simply mix the ingredients with the seasoning and divide them into cups. The butter mixture may not coat everything as evenly, but the snack will still taste delicious.

2. How can I make the snack mix sweeter?
Add a tablespoon of sugar to the cinnamon seasoning and mix in chocolate chips, mini marshmallows, or yogurt-covered raisins after the mixture has cooled.

3. How long does the snack mix stay fresh?
When stored in an airtight container in a cool, dry place, it can stay fresh for up to 3 days. It is best enjoyed sooner for maximum crunch.

4. What can I use instead of peanuts?
Pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, or extra pretzels are good alternatives. For guests with allergies, check all packaged ingredients and avoid cross-contact during preparation.

5. What containers work best for individual snack servings?
Paper party cups, small mason jars, clear plastic snack cups, or cupcake liners placed inside sturdy mugs all work well.

6. Can I prepare different flavors in one batch?
Yes! Divide the mixture into separate bowls before seasoning. Make one cinnamon-sweet version and another savory version with paprika and garlic powder.

A Little Cup of Midnight Happiness!

Set these snack cups beside the games, movie blankets, or party table so everyone can grab a handful whenever they like. They're inexpensive, easy to customize, and make even a simple night at home feel like a proper celebration.