



HOME DEMO NO. 34

Merry Poppings

Next time you want a powerful snack, try popping up some science.

What you need:

1. Popcorn
2. Popcorn maker (air popper or stove top)

What you do:

1. Measure two batches of unpopped popcorn, say 100 ml or 1/3 of a cup of each.
2. Soak one batch in a shallow bowl filled with water.
3. Pop the second batch and count the unpopped kernels.
4. Drain off the water and pat the kernels dry with a paper towel.
5. Pop the wet batch of kernels. When the popping stops, count how many pieces remain unopened.

What's happening?

The water soaks in just a little bit and usually makes every kernel pop! Normally, water in the unpopped popcorn turns to steam in the heat of the popcorn popper and makes the kernel explode. Kernels that don't open in the heat don't build up enough steam inside. Soaking the kernels helps them build up enough pressure to explode and turn inside out.