

# Homemade Halloween Treats

Homemade Halloween treats make great party foods for an All Hallow's Eve get together. In an age when childhood barely resembles what it was a generation ago, there's something comfortingly retro about Halloween. Here are a few "old school" treats to enjoy with your kids. Even if the kids are texting away as you wax nostalgic about the good old days, everyone will still come together for the food! These four homemade Halloween treats are scary-good for Halloween parties, school events, and scary movie nights.

## Popcorn Balls

*Makes approximately 10 balls*

### What You Need:

- 1 cup sugar
- 2/3 cup water
- ¼ cup light corn syrup
- ½ apple cider vinegar
- ¼ kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 10 cups air-popped popcorn
- ¾ cup roasted and unsalted cashew pieces, chopped
- ¾ cup raisins or cranberries

### What You Do:

1. In a small saucepan stir together the sugar, water, light corn syrup, cider vinegar, and salt.
2. Cook over high heat until a candy thermometer inserted into the mixture reaches 260° F (hard ball stage). Remove from the heat and stir in the vanilla.
3. In a large stainless steel bowl, add the popcorn, cashew nuts, and raisins and toss with your hands to mix. Pour the hot candy mixture over the popcorn and stir with a wooden spoon.
4. Lightly grease your hands with vegetable oil. Allow the popcorn mixture to cool slightly (so that it is cool enough to work with but has not solidified too much) and form small popcorn balls with your hands.
5. Allow the balls to cool completely on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Popcorn balls look especially festive in small cellophane bags tied with orange bows.



## Caramel Apples with Sunflower Seeds

*Makes 8 apples*

### What You Need:

- Thick sucker sticks or craft sticks
- 8 small apples
- 1 cup white sugar
- ½ cup brown sugar
- 1/3 cup light corn syrup
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into pieces
- ½ cup heavy cream
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¾ cup chocolate covered sunflower seeds (in fall colors)

### What You Do:

1. Twist the stems off each apple and insert a stick through the top of each one.
2. In a medium saucepan mix the white and brown sugars, light corn syrup, butter, cream, and salt with a wooden spoon. Cook over high heat, stirring constantly, until a candy thermometer inserted into the mixture registers 240° F (soft ball stage).
3. Remove the pan from the heat and allow the mixture to slightly cool and thicken so it is thick enough to cover the apple, but slowly flows if you tilt the pan.
4. Holding onto the stick, dip the apples into the saucepan one by one, tilting the pan to cover the surface of each apple with the caramel.
5. Place the apples on a baking sheet covered with parchment paper to allow them to set up. Once the caramel is cool enough, you can press sunflower seeds into the caramel to decorate the apple.

## Orange Thumbprint Cookies

### What You Need:

- 2 sticks unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 2 teaspoons orange juice
- 1 egg
- 3 cups flour
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- Apricot jam or orange marmalade

### What You Do:

1. Preheat the oven to 350° F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.

2. In a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, cream together the butter and sugar until just blended.
3. Add the orange juice and egg and mix until combined.
4. In a medium bowl, sift the salt and flour. Add the flour mix to the butter mixture, and mix on low speed until well combined.
5. Empty the contents onto a marble slab or clean work surface. Shape the dough into a ball, and flatten with your palm into a disk. Wrap the dough in plastic and chill for at least 30 minutes.
6. Using a knife or bench scraper, cut the disk into 24 equal sized pieces. Take each piece and roll into a ball and place onto a baking sheet.
7. Slightly flatten each ball, and press your thumb into the center of each cookie to make a small indentation. Fill each indentation almost to the top with apricot jam or marmalade.
8. Bake for 25 minutes, making sure to rotate and turn the pans about 15 minutes into the baking time. The cookie tops will still be pale, but the base of the cookie will be golden brown. Allow the cookies to cool completely.

## **Apple Cider**

### **What You Need:**

- ½ gallon apple cider
- 4 whole cinnamon sticks
- 1 orange, ends chopped off then thinly sliced
- 4 cloves

### **What You Do:**

1. Pour the apple cider and cinnamon sticks into a large pot.
2. Press two cloves into each orange end. Add the orange ends and slices to the pot and bring to a simmer. Serve hot.