

Comprehension 3

Nowadays, popcorn is a very popular snack, especially when visiting the cinema. However, did you know that popcorn has a long and varied history?

Popcorn is a special variety of corn, which is different to other varieties of edible corn such as sweetcorn. Each piece contains a tiny drop of water. When it is heated, the water expands, causing the corn to explode and flip inside out. This will only happen when the corn is heated to around 175 degrees Celsius, so remember to be careful when making popcorn at home!

Popcorn was first eaten thousands of years ago by Native Americans from the USA. It was also popped in China during the Song Dynasty (960-279) as well as in India. Over the years, popcorn has been used not only as food, but for other purposes too. Popcorn was important to the Aztecs in Peru as decoration for ceremonial headdresses and necklaces, and as ornaments on statues of their gods.

It may sound strange to us now, but back in the 1700s in the USA, housewives used to serve popcorn with sugar and cream for breakfast! Americans now eat more than 17 billion quarts of popcorn a year, an average of 57 litres per person per year. Popcorn is even celebrated there with its own day and month - January 19 is National Popcorn Day, and October is National Popcorn Month.

Popcorn is sold in almost every cinema, and as well as being a delicious treat, it is very lucrative for the cinema owners. This is because it is very cheap to produce, and as it is a salty food, it causes customers to become thirsty and encourages them to spend more money on buying drinks. In fact, some cinemas make more money from selling popcorn than they do from ticket sales!

Read the following article and answer the questions in complete sentences.

1. According to paragraph 2, why could making popcorn at home be dangerous?

2. What does “it” in line 4 refer to?

3. How many different countries are mentioned in paragraph 3?

4. What are the uses of popcorn over the years?

5. How much popcorn does the average American eat each year?

6. Find a word in paragraph 5 that means the same as ‘profitable’.

7. Why does selling popcorn make so much money for cinema owners?

