

Good Question: Why is popcorn synonymous with the movies?

by Matt Gephardt | Saturday, October 1st 2016



(KUTV) The sights and sounds of going to the movies start long before you enter the theater -- not to mention the smells.

For as long as most people can remember, movie theaters have been filled with the familiar sound of popcorn popping and the smell of salt and butter.

At the Megaplex Theater at the Gateway, Food Court Manager Francina Huggins says popcorn is easily the number one concession sold. She says they go through at least 1000 pounds of kernels per week and way more when a big movie like Star Wars premieres.

But it was not always that you could find popcorn in theaters -- or any food for that matter according to Amber Stepper with Showcase Cinemas.

"When movie theaters first opened, it was sort of a high-end experience," she said.

Stepper says movie theaters used to be a lot more posh than they are today. There was no food or drink allowed.

Then the great depression hit. The movies became a relatively inexpensive way for people to escape life's struggles.

Others, trying to make a buck, would also head to the theaters with popcorn kernels and kettles hoping to sell popcorn to theater patrons waiting outside. And patrons, as they sometimes do, ignored the "no food or drink" signs and snuck their snack in.

"Then the theater owners said, 'well, okay, we don't need people outside our doors selling this to our customers and then bringing it in. We'll sell it within the theater itself.'"

From there, popcorn became a major piece of a theater's bottom line with snacks accounting for about 40 percent of revenue.

And now we know how movie theaters and popcorn became bedfellow. Thank you to Zach from Sandy for submitting this Good Question. If you have one, please email Gephardt@kutv.tv.