



PEAS TALKING POINTS

2. A Seed of History about Peas

- Peas are **native to the Asia and North Africa**. Wild peas can still be found in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, and Iran. They were first cultivated over 10,000 years ago and had spread across Europe by the 1400s.
- Peas were originally grown for their dry, yellow seeds. In fact, green peas were thought to be poisonous until the Middle Ages.
- The earliest colonists brought peas to the New World where this valuable vegetable became a staple in their diets.
- The first cultivated peas were bitter tasting. The first sweet tasting pea was grown in the 18th century and quickly replaced the bitter pea in most diets.
- Peas were not only a diet staple around the world, they were also useful for determining genetic codes. Gregor Mendell experimented with pea plants when conducting genetic research.



3. & 4. How Do Peas Grow?

- Peas are legumes. Legumes are plants that bear fruit in the form of pods enclosing the seeds (known as beans).
- **Pea pods grow from the flowers after they have been pollinated by insects.**
- Peas thrive in cool weather and younger plants are likely able to survive a light frost. **Most pea plants are planted in the early spring and harvested before the summer months.**
- Peas are light feeders and do not require much fertilization in order to grow. In fact, over-fertilizing pea plants will cause the plant to become nitrogen saturated and more susceptible to frost.
- The optimum temperature that pea plants need to grow is between 40-60 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Pea plants only need to be thoroughly watered once a week, unless temperatures reach above 60 degrees F.
- Pea stems snap easily so they should be harvested carefully.

5. Reasons to Eat Peas

- Peas are rich in fiber and protein which aid in healthy digestion and growth of muscle.
- **Vitamin A, Vitamin K, and Vitamin C**
 - Important for healthy vision, proper bone growth, and a healthy immune system.
- **Thiamin, folate** and several essential minerals including Copper, manganese and Iron



How Much Do I Need?

- A ½ cup of cooked or raw peas is about one cupped handful. *Try to eat a handful of peas every day for one of your 5-9 fruit and veggie servings!*

6. How do you pick good Peas?

- Peas should be **bright green** in color and the pods should not be cracked. If they are dull green in color that means the peas are overripe or dried out.
- **Store peas in the refrigerator for 2-3 days** or in the **freezer** for several months.
- Peas generally have fewer calories and more nutrients if they are consumed raw. However, most peas are usually canned or cooked prior to being consumed. Canning adds more preservatives to the peas and cooking rids of some essential nutrients, so peas are healthiest when they are eaten raw.
- While most people only eat the seeds of the pea plant (the peas) the pods of some varieties are also edible.

Fun Facts:

Pea Varieties

- There are generally three different varieties of peas that are commonly consumed: garden peas (or green peas), snow peas, and snap peas. However, there are thousands of different varieties of peas.
- Although most pea varieties are green in color, peas can also be brown, yellow, or even purple.

Interesting Facts about Peas

- The oldest pea ever recorded was found in Thailand. It was 3,000 years old!
- The proper etiquette for eating peas in the United Kingdom is to smash them into a mush with the back of a fork.
- Canada is the world's largest producer and exporter of peas. The country produces almost half of the world's supply of peas. France, China, and Russia are the next top producing countries.
- Pea plants will grow up to 6 feet or higher as vines in rich soil.
- The world record for eating peas is 7,175 peas in an hour set by an English woman in 1984.
- Peas were among the first vegetables to be frozen before they were marketed. About 95% of all peas harvested today are sold frozen or canned.
- Peas are sometimes consumed to relieve ulcer pains in the stomach because they 'absorb' some of the acid.

Resources:

<http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Pea>

<http://www.burpee.com/vegetables/peas/all-about-peas-article10250.html>

http://www.schoolnutritionandfitness.com/data/pdf/harvestofmonth/mar_en.pdf

<http://www.thefactsite.com/2013/08/interesting-pea-facts.html>

<http://homeguides.sfgate.com/fun-pea-plants-41418.html>

<http://topfoodfacts.com/9-things-you-didnt-know-about-peas/>