



Peas

Food \$ense Guide to Eating Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

Darlene Christensen, Extension Associate Professor

Utah Local Fresh Season

Availability: Peas are an early vegetable crop. They are available throughout the summer, but pea plants prefer cooler weather. If planting in a home garden, they can be planted as early as April and are one of the earliest vegetables available from the home garden. Fresh peas may be found in the markets starting in the spring. Frozen, canned, and dried peas are available year-round.

Eating

Selecting:

Fresh peas: Select peas with smooth, bright green pods that contain a good number of seeds that are small in size.

Pod peas: Select peas with bright green, crisp pods that are not damaged, soft or shriveled. Snow peas should have flat pods with tiny seeds that are barely visible. Sugar snap peas should have mature seeds that are large enough to make the pod appear bumpy.

Cleaning and Preparing: Snow peas and sugar snap peas are meant to be eaten with the pod. Thoroughly rinse pea pods before using. Individual peas, once out of the pod, should also be rinsed.

To prepare snow peas, snap off both ends with a knife. To prepare sugar snap peas, snap the stem end and remove the string from the inner side. Split the pod of green peas open by pressing on both

sides of the seam with thumbs. Use your thumb to pop the peas out of the pod.

Storing: It is best to serve all types of fresh peas the day they are purchased. If they must be stored, place them in a perforated plastic bag in the refrigerator. It is important that the bag is perforated, otherwise the peas may “sweat,” which will encourage the growth of mold. Do not wash peas before they are stored. Shell green peas right before you cook them.

Cooking: Steaming peas is a good way to cook them. They will retain their nutrition, color and texture. A steamer basket is helpful to get the best results. A steamer basket is a round shape with movable petals on it made of metal. Steam baskets can be purchased at discount or grocery stores. A metal strainer can also be used. Place a pan on the stovetop, turn the heat to high and cook till the water boils. You’ll need enough water so that it is below the steamer basket. Put the peas in the steamer basket and put the steamer basket into the pot and over the boiling water. Make sure none of the water comes through the holes in the basket. Steam for 2 minutes.

Peas can also be steamed in the microwave. Place vegetables in a microwave-safe bowl and add 2 to 3 tablespoons of water. Be careful not to submerge the peas in water. Cover the bowl with microwave safe plastic wrap, leaving one corner open to vent. Microwave on high for 1 to 2 minutes.

Peas can also be boiled in water in a saucepan. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes or until tender.

Nutrition Highlights: Peas are a good source Vitamin A & C, as well as fiber.

Growing Peas: For more information on how to grow peas, refer to Growing Peas in the Garden by Dan Drost.

http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/HG_Garden_2005-09.pdf

Preserving Peas: You can freeze, dry or can peas. For more information, refer to:

<http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/search.html>

References

1. Utah State University Extension, Food Sense program Viva Vegetable curriculum, Peas lesson. Available at www.extension.usu.edu/fsne
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Guide Editors: Heidi LeBlanc and Debra Christofferson

Additional Editors: Marie Stosich, Gayla Johnson, Eileen Milligan

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This publication is issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Noelle E. Cockett, Vice President for Extension and Agriculture, Utah State University.

(FN/FoodSense/2011-14pr)

Pea & Cabbage Cole Slaw

2 cups peas
1 pound bag pre-shredded cabbage or 1 small cabbage head, shredded
6 tablespoons reduced fat buttermilk
1/4 cup low-fat sour cream
2 teaspoons dill
1 garlic glove, minced
1 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
1/2 tablespoon white vinegar

In a large bowl, place cabbage and peas. Toss. In another bowl, combine buttermilk, sour cream, dill, garlic, salt, pepper and vinegar. Stir until all ingredients are blended. Pour dressing mixture over pea/cabbage mixture. Mix until thoroughly coated. Cover with plastic or place in an airtight container and refrigerate until well chilled, approximately 2 hours.

Recipe adapted from: www.recipetips.com

Sugar Snap Peas with Toasted Sesame Seeds Yield: 5 servings

4 cups sugar snap peas
1 tablespoon sesame seeds (toasted in a skillet until golden brown)
1 tablespoon sesame oil

De-string peas. Steam peas 1 to 2 minutes. If boiling in water, cook for 2 to 3 minutes or until tender. Drain and plunge them into a big bowl of ice water to stop cooking and prevent the peas from being mushy. When cool, drain the peas and mix with sesame seeds and sesame oil in a bowl.

Recipe Source: Iowa State University Extension Services.