



## Zion Farmers Market KidCraft

### Peas in a Pod



Peas are such a kid-friendly vegetable. They're sweet, they're cool, and you can eat them all kinds of ways. Fresh or frozen, no vegetable is easier, more affordable or tastier to serve kids than peas

Fresh peas are a great thing to get at the Market and have your child help prepare. Getting the fresh peas out of their pods is the perfect job for tiny hands!

Here's a fun craft that celebrates these jolly little balls of goodness.

#### **Supplies**

- 2 pieces of green construction paper
- Green craft foam
- 1 piece of white cardstock
- Scissors
- Glue
- Marker

#### **Instructions**

Lay the 2 pieces of construction paper on top of each other. Draw a pea-pod shape on the top one and cut them out of both.

Trace a cup to make 3 circles on the green craft foam. Cut them out.

Have your child put glue on the back of one of the pea pods, and glue it to the white cardstock

Then have them put glue on the round bottom part of the pea pod and put the other one on top so that the top is left open. You might also want to pull it out a bit so that there's room for the foam peas to fit inside.

Give your child the marker and have them draw smiley faces on the 3 peas.

Lastly, have your child place the peas inside the pod!

## Pea Facts for Kids

Peas to meet you! OK, bad pun but people have been making jokes about us for so long that it rubs off. We can't help it if our name sounds like one of your bodily functions - you know, nudge, nudge, wink, wink, say no more. I bet you've made cracks about us in the playground at some time or another, but we don't really mind. We're fun loving food. Let me tell you more about us.

We grow on a climbing plant which produces pods containing seeds or peas (that's us). We're sold in the pod and either eaten whole (pod and peas), or we're removed from the inedible pod before eating (shelled peas).

Our pods are about 5-8cm long and 1-1.5cm wide, bright green, cylindrical and boat-shaped, with a small point at one end. We lie inside and are small, smooth, bead-like green seeds, about 1cm in diameter, arranged in a row, each of us attached to one seam of the pod.

Our pod splits down the top and bottom seams exposing us so we can be easily removed. In the edible-podded types our seeds are immature and softer than those which are shelled. The edible pods are often much flatter and have rounded bumps along the sides showing where each of us is located.

## Availability

Peas are available all year round.

Did you know?

- We have a high sugar content and start losing our sweetness soon after harvest - so eat us quickly.
- We're really old. The earliest cultivated pea, dated 9750 BC, was found in Spirit Cave on the Thai-Burma border.

## Varieties

We're not sold by variety but you can buy several different types. Peas for shelling - We are sold as green peas, garden peas or peas.



### Sugar Snap Peas

We look like peas used for shelling but have a tender, crisp, small, pale green, edible pod with sweet juicy seeds. Our pods are about 5-8cm and our seeds are rounder than snow peas.



### Snow Peas

We are edible, flat-podded peas, about 8-10cm long by 2.5cm containing tender and sweet seeds. Both our pods and small seeds are edible.

## Why Peas Are Good To Eat

- All of us, with or without our pods, are among the best vegetable sources of dietary fibre.
- Most vegetables are quite low in protein, but we have good supplies.

- We're an excellent source of vitamin C (especially edible-podded peas) and a good source of niacin (B3), folate (another of the B vitamins) and beta carotene (which the body converts to vitamin A).
- Green peas also provide iron and zinc.
- We're also a good source of potassium, especially our edible-podded types.
- 100g of green peas have 300 kJ, while 100g of edible-podded peas have 150kJ.

### **How Peas are Grown and Harvested**

We were always dried until about the 16th century. You can't chew the pod of regular peas, but sugar snap peas and snow peas have been specially bred so that the fibers in the pod go in one direction and can be chewed.

Our parent plant is generally grown on supporting structures due to its weak stem - to help it climb it produces small, green, snake-like tendrils which twist around any support to assist in holding it upright.

We grow best in cool moist conditions and can be grown in most soil types as long as the drainage is good. We can take up to 5 months from sowing to maturity if planted as a winter crop (and grown inland) or up to 3 months if used as a summer crop and grown on the tablelands. We're harvested when our pods are fully developed.

The harvesting of snow peas is a little different as they have to be picked when they reach the right size but before their seeds start to get too big. This means the farmer has to keep checking his crop about every 3 days.

### **Choosing Peas**

Select green peas which are small to medium in size with waxy, plump, bright green pods. Choose bright, crisp snow peas and sugar snap peas. Smaller pods are generally the most tender.

### **How to Keep Peas**

Store us in a plastic storage bag in the crisper section of the refrigerator. Use within 2-3 days.

### **History of Peas**

We have been found in ancient ruins dated at 8000 years old in the Middle East and in Turkey. However, the oldest of us were found in a cave in Burma dated 9750 years old. We were common throughout ancient Europe as far back as the Neolithic Period and are as old and important as wheat and barley.

In these ancient times dried peas formed an essential part of the diet because they could be stored for long periods and provided protein during the famine months of winter. We spread along the trade routes to the East, being recorded in China and India between 1100 to 1600 years ago.

The Greeks and Romans loved us and many varieties were traded in the Trajan Market in ancient Rome. The Romans probably took us to Britain and, as a result, King John II of England in the Middle Ages ate so many he is reported to have died from overeating. However, we didn't become popular in England until the 16th century.

### **Fun Ways to Eat and Cook Peas**

We need to be removed from our pods unless we're very young and tender when our pods can be cooked and eaten too. Slide your thumb down our pod to split it open from the stem end and remove us from top to bottom.

We're normally cooked but can be enjoyed raw, especially in salads or while we're being shelled! Boil or microwave until just tender, 4-8 minutes, depending on quantity. We will become less tender if overcooked. Serve us as a vegetable or add us to other vegetables, soups and casseroles.