Brought to you by Viva Vegetables

A Utah State University Extension and Nutrition and Food Sciences Department campaign

The goal of the *How to Nourish With* lesson series is to provide adults and older children with helpful information and demonstrations about selecting, preparing, cooking with, and storing vegetables. This basic knowledge may encourage families to include vegetables more often as a mainstay of family meals and snacks

Objectives:

1. Adults will explain a health benefit provided by peas.
2. Adults will explain how to select peas.
3. Adults will discuss cost- and time-effective strategies for incorporating peas into family meals.
4. Adults will discuss preparation and storage techniques of peas, including cleaning, trimming cooking, and storing.
5. Adults will make and taste food that includes peas.

Total Time: ~1 hour

Materials

- Ingredients for chosen recipe(s)
- Utensils, plates, bowls, napkins to serve the recipe to participants

Preparation Required

- Read over lesson plan
- Make copies of handouts for participants
- Gather ingredients for recipes

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LESSON PLAN

Introduction: Welcome and guessing game

Time: 5 minutes

- Welcome the class and thank them for making time to attend this class.
- Briefly introduce yourself and the program.
- Explain to the class that you will be discussing peas, including three different types of peas:
    - Traditional green peas also called garden peas
    - Snap peas
    - Snow peas
- Garden peas were scientifically engineered to have less fibrous pods so that they pods could be eaten in addition to the actual pea. Those are known as snap peas.
- Peas have been used in their dry form since ancient times. Archaeologists have found peas in Egyptian tombs.
- It wasn't until the 16th century that tender varieties of peas were developed and eaten fresh instead of dried.

Objective 1: *Adults will explain a health benefit provided by peas.*

Activity: Nutrition discussion

Time: 2-3 minutes

- Peas are a good low-calorie source of protein.
- A 100-calorie serving of peas (about ¾ cup) contains more protein than a whole egg or a tablespoon of peanut butter and has less than one gram of fat and no cholesterol.
- Americans generally get more than enough protein from day to day. Peas are a wise protein choice because they can help you stay fuller longer because they are a plant source of protein. They are also lower calorie than many other sources of protein. For those who are calorie-conscious or looking for a high-protein, low-calorie snack, peas are the answer.

Objective 2: *Adults will explain how to select the best peas.*

Activity: Discussion

Time: 2-3 minutes

- Choosing great-tasting fresh peas isn't hard if you know what to look for.
- **Ask the class**: How would you know if the peas you're choosing at the market will taste good?
    - Look at the pods that are holding the peas. Avoid wrinkled pods.
    - If you are purchasing sugar snap peas, the peas inside the pod should be plump and firm.
    - If you are purchasing snow peas, the pod should be very green and the seeds should be very small and flat. Test them for the "snap" factor. Snow peas should snap easily when broken in half. Pods should have smooth, unbroken, unwrinkled skin. Avoid those snow peas with wilted, discolored, or shriveled parts.

Objective 3: Adults will discuss cost- and time-effective strategies for incorporating peas into family meals.

Activity: Discussion

Time: 3-5 minutes

- Peas are sold in various forms in the stores.

- **Ask the class**: What forms are peas sold in at the store? What are the advantages and disadvantages to time and cost when incorporating them into meals in your home?
    - Canned
        - *Advantages*: Very fast, can be easily added to meals or heated as a side dish
        - *Disadvantages*: Very compromised taste, the taste of canned peas may not encourage family members to enjoy peas, added salt unless the low-sodium version is purchased.
    - Frozen
        - *Advantages*: Fast, can be heated in the microwave, quickly added to heated dishes with no previous cooking required, many times can be found mixed with other types of vegetables for use.
        - *Disadvantages*: Take up space in the freezer.
    - Fresh
        - *Advantages*: Superior taste, entire pod of sugar snap peas and snow peas can be eaten (little to no food waste), many ways to cook them.
        - *Disadvantages*: Shorter season of availability, expensive out of season.
    - Dried
        - *Advantages*: Long storage life, inexpensive.
        - *Disadvantages*: Take longer to cook than other forms of peas and cannot be eaten raw.
- Peas are a classic add-in to many family favorites.
- **Ask the class**: What dishes does your family enjoy that include peas? What are some creative ways you have incorporated peas into what you feed to your family?
    - Casseroles
    - Pasta sauces
    - Green or pasta salads
    - Cooked with other vegetables
    - Rice pilafs or risottos
    - Pot pies

Objective 4: Adults will understand preparation and storage techniques of peas, including cleaning, trimming, cooking, and storing.

Activity: Preparation and discussion
Time: 30 minutes

Storage

- 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.

Preparation

- Peas are delicious either cooked or raw.
    - Raw snow peas are good in salads and appetizers or as a snack.
- Peas can be cooked several ways:

Boiling

- Garden peas are typically boiled. Fresh from the pod, they may take 2-3 minutes to become tender. If garden peas are frozen, follow the directions on the bag.

- Dried peas are also boiled. If you are cooking whole dried peas, soak them in water for 4-6 hours. Split dried peas can go directly into boiling water. Boil the peas over low heat for 60-90 minutes often checking for tenderness. Once the peas have become tender, drain them and serve hot.

Steaming

- Steaming is typically only used for peas that are still in the pods (snow peas or sugar snap).
- If using a steamer basket, add water the pan so it is just under the bottom of the basket. Put the lid on and steam for 1 to 2 minutes.
- If a steamer is unavailable, peas can be steamed just the same.

Stir-frying

- Snow peas in particular are delicious in stir-frys, served over rice with other vegetables and with a little soy sauce.
- To stir fry, rinse the snow peas in cold water. Put a little olive oil in a saucepan and turn the stove to medium heat. Add the snow peas and stir for 5-7 minutes and serve hot.

Objective 5: *Adults will make and taste something that includes peas.*

Activity: Demonstrate a recipe that includes peas.
Time: Varies per recipe

Conclusion: Summary and Regroup

Time: 5 minutes

- **Ask the class**: How will you incorporate peas into the food you make this week?
- Thank the class for coming and participating in the lesson and encourage them to use peas in different ways.

Delicious recipeas

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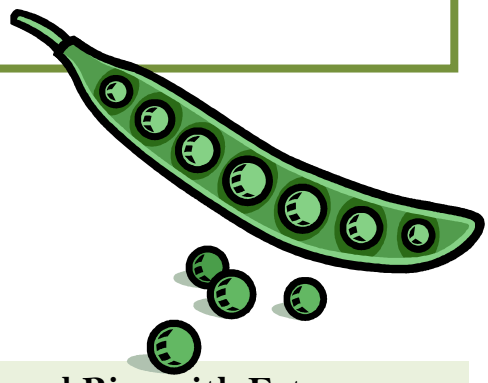
Roasted Snap Peas with Red Onion

¼ red onion, chopped
2 teaspoons olive oil
¼ teaspoon salt
2 pieces cooked bacon, crumbled

Preheat oven to 475F. Toss peas, onion, oil, salt and pepper in a medium bowl. Transfer to a baking sheet and spread in a single layer. Toast in the oven, stirring once halfway through, until the peas are tender and beginning to brown slightly, 12-14 minutes. Serve warm, sprinkled with bacon if desired.

Peas are easy to add to other foods.
Add peas to:

- Tuna or chicken salad
- Pasta salad
- Pasta sauce
- Green salad
- Soups
- Stews
- Casseroles
- Stir fry



Minted Peas and Rice with Feta

Adapted from Eating Well magazine
Makes 4 servings, ¾ C each

1 ¼ C reduced-sodium chicken broth
¾ C instant brown rice
1 ½ C frozen peas (6 ounces)
¾ C sliced scallions (green onions)
¼ C finely crumbled feta cheese
¼ C sliced fresh mint (or other herb of your choice)
Pepper to taste

Bring broth to a boil in a large saucepan over high heat. Add rice and bring to a simmer; cover, reduce heat to medium-low and cook for 4 minutes. Stir in peas and return to a simmer over high heat. Cover, reduce heat to medium-low and continue to cook until the peas are hot and the rice has absorbed most of the liquid, about 6 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in scallions, feta, mint and pepper. Cover and let stand until the liquid is absorbed, 3 to 5 minutes.

Ham and Brown Rice

From the Healthy Homemade 2010 Nutrition and Fitness Calendar by Iowa EFNEP

1 14-ounce can low sodium chicken broth
2 ½ cups cooked chopped ham
½ teaspoon minced garlic
1 ½ cups uncooked instant brown rice
½ teaspoon ground black pepper
2 cups frozen peas
Optional: 2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese

In a skillet, combine broth, ham, and garlic. Heat to boiling. Stir in rice and black pepper. Reduce heat to a simmer, cover and cook for 10 minutes. Uncover; add peas and cook about 4 minutes more until rice is tender and peas are hot. Sprinkle Parmesan cheese on top if desired. Serve immediately. If desired, this recipe is easy to double and freeze, so you'll have extra for a future meal.

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Distinguishing between the different types of peas

Garden peas	Snow peas	Sugar snap peas
Firm, rounded pods	The pod is translucent	Cross between garden and snow pea
Pods are very fibrous and cannot be eaten	You can see the shape of the peas inside the pod	Edible pods
Only eaten shelled (peas taken out of the pod)	Never shelled	Never shelled
95% of garden peas are sold frozen or canned	Thin pod	Pods are not fibrous