



## About Peas

### History

Peas have been used in dry form since ancient times. Archaeologists found them in Egyptian tombs. In the 17th century, more tender varieties were developed and eaten fresh. Green peas are part of the legume family.

### The Plant

Fresh shell, snap, and snow peas are available locally. Shell peas, the most common, are succulent and sweet when young, but they lose these qualities as they age and their pod is inedible. The snap pea features sweet, juicy peas encased in a crunchy, edible pod. The snow pea is a flat, edible pod containing undeveloped peas.

Cooked peas are a great side dish, and they may be added to salads, casseroles, or soups. Steaming or stir-frying peas in oil creates a fresher flavor, and more nutrients remain in the pea. Snow peas can be eaten raw with your favorite vegetable dips. Peas are a good source of vitamins A, B, and C and contain potassium, iron, and calcium.

## How to Buy

When shopping for shell peas and snap peas, look for bright green pods that are well-filled and tender. Snow peas should be shiny and flat, with very small peas that are barely visible through the pod. The smallest pods are the sweetest and most tender.

## How to Prepare

### Shell Peas

- Rinse peas just before shelling.
- To shell, pinch the stem off with your fingernails and pull the string down the length of the pod. The pod will pop open and the peas can be pushed out of the pod with your thumb.
- Wash peas before cooking.
- Blanch or steam shelled peas for 2 to 4 minutes. Watch for color to heighten and be careful not to overcook them.
- Serve plain or topped with butter.

### Snap Peas

- Rinse peas just before use.
- Remove strings; start from the bottom tip and pull the string up the front; then snap the stem off and pull the string down the back of the pod.
- Eat young fresh snap peas raw or cook them quickly, no more than 2 minutes.

### Snow Peas

- Rinse just before use.
- Cut the tips from both ends of the pod.
- Eat raw or lightly cooked; sauté them alone or with other vegetables in the last few minutes of cooking.

## How to Store

*Use fresh peas as soon as possible.*

Storing sacrifices some of the fresh pea sweet flavor and crisp texture. If peas must be stored, place them in a perforated plastic bag and refrigerate. Do not wash peas before storing. After cooking, cooled leftovers may be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for four to five days.

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