



• **POD - ATIVELY DELICIOUS!** •

By Bill Lubing



At 18 years of age I naturally knew most everything there was to know about the world. So, when I took leave of my parent's home and struck out on my own, I was unprepared to be blindsided by two chunks of reality.

First, it was a slightly more complicated process and the results were a little drearier than my original concept of the checkbook reconciliation procedure. Well, dreary from my point of view but not the bank's. Second, peas do not only come in a tin can. They are not all mushy and they are not one shade of green and they are capable of doing much more than making mashed potatoes look a little less white and a little more colorful.

Now that I am older (oh heck, just old!) and realize I know almost nothing about the world, I know I do know a little bit about peas. I know I like them. I know they're good for you. Did you know this about the simple garden pea?

- Just one serving of freshly frozen garden peas contains as much vitamin C as two large apples, more fiber than a slice of whole grain bread, and more thiamine than a pint of whole milk.

- Peas are a good source of vitamin A, foliate, thiamine (B1), iron, and phosphorus.
- They are rich in protein, carbohydrates, and fiber while low in fat, which is mostly of the unsaturated kind.
- A pea, although treated as a vegetable in cooking, is botanically a fruit. The term is generally used to describe the small spherical seeds or the pods of the legume *Pisum sativum*.

We can credit the Italians with breeding what has become known as "piselli novelli" or new peas, the small peas most of us today call petits pois (little peas). Yet there are many more varieties that can be purchased fresh or frozen at your local grocery store or fresh at your area farmers' market.

Like all peas, snow peas are a type of legume. Containing five to seven seeds, the flat pods are from two to three inches in length. Their name is thought to come from the whitish tint that is reflected from the pods. Find snow peas that are brightly colored and crisp. They should snap when folded over. Just before using pinch off the ends and rinse them in cold water. While we often associate snow peas with

Chinese cooking, their use is more widespread.

Referred to by the French as mange tout meaning “eat it all,” snow peas are a welcome and unexpected addition to many salads. One winning combination that always delights dinner guests is to combine raw snow peas with grapefruit slices and mixed greens. As an appetizing side dish, wok-fry them with shiitake mushrooms, green peppers, carrots, and sesame seeds.

With their pods round instead of flat, snap peas taste similar to a typical garden pea but are edible “in the pod” because they are less fibrous when young. Several cultivars (or cultivated varieties) of the snap pea include the “sugar rae,” “sugar bon,” and “sugar snap.”

The soft and tender pods of snap peas are crisp, sweet, and succulent. They can be served in salads or eaten whole. Like their snow pea cousins, they can be stir-fried or steamed.

While snow peas need their ends trimmed before eating, snap pea pods may need to be “stringed.” This entails removing the membranous string running along the top of the pod from base to tip. Overcooking the pods will make them come apart. So they should only be lightly steamed or gently stir-fried. Snap pea pods may be frozen but not canned. The high canning temperature causes too much damage to the peas.

Snap peas are nutritious and filling, yet not as high in total carbohydrates and fats as normal peas. The pods themselves contribute mostly water and vitamins to the consumer.

Peas are climbing plants. Pea sticks, a trellis, or other support system is necessary for their optimal growth. And for those of us who are culinarily adventurous, that’s a wonderful thing.

The peas hold on to their support by the use of “tendrils.” These tightly coiled modifications of the terminal leaflets not only help the pea plant to grow, they are also a tasty delicacy.

Called dau miu (dow MEW), the Cantonese name for “pea shoots,” they consist of the thin, delicately crisp tendrils plus the uppermost leaves of the green pea plant. Tendrils have a flavor that’s a cross between peas and spinach, with just a smidgen of watercress. It’s available in some Oriental grocery stores and farmers’ markets in the spring. Tendrils are best used the day of purchase. Wash just before using. They can be used fresh in salads or added to a stir-fry at the last minute.

Well, it’s been many years since I’ve had problems reconciling my checkbook. Yet I still enjoy peas in all their varieties, from the simple canned variety to the delicately flavored tendrils. And better yet, I’m constantly learning more about this wonderful garden treasure.



At this time of the year peas are plentiful at the grocery store, through your CSA, or at your local farmers’ market. Za Teng, Douglas, and Tou Pheng Xiong had great quantities and varieties available at a recent Wednesday Dane County Farmers’ Market.

PEAS AND PEA TENDRILS WITH HONEY LEMON DRESSING

Ingredients

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 2 cups shelled fresh peas or 1 (10-ounce) package frozen baby peas (do not thaw frozen peas)
- 8 ounces pea tendrils, cut into 4-inch lengths
- salt and pepper, to taste

Preparation

Whisk oil, lemon juice, and honey in a small bowl to blend; set dressing aside. Bring a large pot of salted water to boil.

Add peas and cook 3 minutes. Add pea tendrils; cook 2 minutes. Drain well.

Return vegetables to pot; add oil-lemon dressing and toss to coat. Season to taste.

LEMONY PEA SOUP

Ingredients

- 2³/₄ cups chicken broth
- 10 snow pea pods
- 3/4 cup fresh shelled peas
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup heavy cream
- 1¹/₂ tablespoon lemon juice

Preparation

Trim snow peas and cut diagonally into thin slivers, set aside. In a small saucepan bring 2 cups of water to a boil. Pour fresh shelled peas into boiling water and simmer for two minutes. Drain peas and set aside.

In a 2-quart saucepan heat butter over moderately low heat until foam subsides and stir in flour. Cook roux, stirring constantly, for 2 minutes. Add broth and cream in a stream, whisking, and simmer, whisking, for 2 minutes, or until soup thickens slightly. Remove pan from heat.

Add shelled peas and snow peas to soup and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 1 minute, or until peas are crisp-tender. Stir in lemon juice, and salt and pepper to taste.

Wisconsin is a state that loves food. We celebrate it at every opportunity. Here are food festivals and celebrations occurring in July and August. *Happy road trip and good eating at the end of your journey!*



JULY 13-15
Greek Fest
 Milwaukee, WI
 (800) 884-FAIR
www.annunciationwi.com
 Held at State Fair Park, Greek Fest offers live entertainment, adult and children's Greek dancing, and lots of good Greek food. Don't forget the baklava.



JULY 27-29
German Fest
 Milwaukee, WI
 (414) 464-9444
www.germanfest.com
 The largest German festival in the U.S. Authentic food, music and entertainment, folk dancing and cultural exhibits. Children's activities, live glockenspiel, and spectacular fireworks nightly.



AUGUST 16-19
Irish Fest
 Milwaukee, WI
 (800) 884-FAIR
www.irishfest.com
 Milwaukee Irish Fest is renowned as the world's largest Irish culture festival. It is truly a taste of Ireland featuring music, song, sports, genealogy, poetry, food, culture, and dance ... lots and lots of dance.



JULY 19-22
Festa Italiana
 Milwaukee, WI
 (414) 223-2808
www.festaitaliana.com
 The largest Italian-American festival in America features Italian music, food, and entertainment. Sponsored by the Italian Community Center, the festival is also known for its large nightly fireworks and pyrotechnic shows put on by Bartolotta Fireworks. Over 30 bakeries, delis, and restaurants offer up some mighty tasty Italian food. Other attractions include flag throwers, bocce, gondola rides, and Sunday mass.

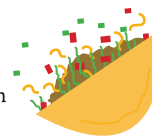


AUGUST 3-5
African World Fest
 Milwaukee, WI
 (715) 273-6442
www.africanworldfestival.com
 A festival celebrating African heritage with dance, music, food, educational programs, and items for sale in the marketplace.

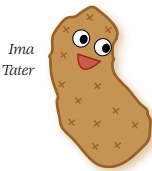


AUGUST 16-19
Sweet Corn Festival
 Sun Prairie, WI
 (608) 837-4547
www.sunprairiechamber.com
 Sweet corn Saturday and Sunday only, family entertainment stage, kiddie corner, animal tent, craft fair, bingo, carnival, beer tent with live bands, food vendors, midget auto racing. See their website for a complete schedule.

AUGUST 10-12
Arab World Fest
 Milwaukee, WI
 (414) 727-5517
www.arabworldfest.com
 Come to Arab World Fest and join a celebration of the food, music, and rich cultural heritage of the Arab people. The festival offers a family-friendly setting where you and your family will have fun while learning about Arab culture. A wide variety of activities and events will be offered including cooking demonstrations, Middle Eastern dance lessons, and a special children's craft area.



AUGUST 24-26
Mexican Fiesta
 Milwaukee, WI
 (414) 383-7066
www.mexicanfiesta.org
 Spice up your life each summer at Mexican Fiesta. Encounter the rich culture and heritage of Mexico as you enjoy mouth-watering edibles, a colorful marketplace, and foot-stomping rhythms. Three days of fun, food, mariachi, and fiesta for everyone.



JULY 27-28
Almond Tater Toot
 Almond, WI
 (888) 417-4040
www.almondtd.com
 Village festival including a parade, music, chicken/pork chop dinner, and more!



We don't know about all the fests out there so if you know of one you think we should include, drop us a line at info@bountifulcupboard.com.