

Common Edible Peas in the United States

This resource is to assist health department staff during foodborne illness investigations potentially linked to exposure to peas. The chart below provides detailed information on differentiating features of the most common edible peas in the United States.

"Peas" most commonly refers to the edible seeds from the plant species *Pisum sativum*. Other species of plant may be referred to commonly as "peas" as well.

Common Name	Green pea	Snow pea	Snap pea
			
Other Common Names	Garden pea, English pea, field pea	Chinese pea pod	Sugar snap pea
Scientific Name	<i>Pisum sativum</i>	<i>Pisum sativum</i> var. <i>saccharatum</i>	<i>Pisum sativum</i> var. <i>macrocarpon</i>
Relationships	General garden pea	Variety of garden pea	Variety of garden pea, cross between garden pea and snow pea
Descriptions at Harvest	Firm, rounded pods 1 to 4 inches long; ripe peas inside are round and may be wrinkled or smooth; peas are most commonly green or yellow, though other colors exist	Thin-walled, flat pods 2 to 5 inches long; peas inside are light green and immature	Thick-walled, rounded pods 3 to 3 ½ inches long; ripe peas inside are round and green
Preparations	Peas need to be shelled from the pod (which is discarded); can be served raw or cooked; often sold frozen, dried, or canned	Whole pod may be eaten; strings along pod seams usually removed before eating, can be served raw or cooked; may be sold fresh or frozen	Whole pod may be eaten; strings along pod seams usually removed before eating; can be served raw or cooked; may be sold fresh or frozen
Common Uses	Pasta salads, cold vegetable salads, soups, as a side dish	American Chinese dishes such as stir fries	Raw in salads, stir fried, cooked as a side dish

References

- Gallery, Christine. "What's the Difference Between Snow Peas, Snap Peas, and Garden Peas?" www.thekitchn.com. Accessed 23 May 2016.
- Grygus, Andrew. "Varieties-Beans, Peas & Lentils." www.clovegarden.com. Accessed 23 May 2016.
- Meyer, Scott. "Snow Peas." www.rodalorganiclife.com. Accessed 23 May 2016.
- Pavek, P.L.S. 2012. Plant guide for pea (*Pisum sativum* L.). USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Pullman, WA.
- USDA Foods Product Information Sheet for Child Nutrition Programs. "100350-Peas, Green, No Salt Added, Frozen." January 2016.