



Sweet Pea Mac 'n Cheese Cups

By Erin Fletter

Prep Time 15 / **Cook Time** 40 / **Serves** 4 - 6

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

fold: to gently and slowly mix a light ingredient into a heavier ingredient so as not to lose air and to keep the mixture tender, such as incorporating whipped egg whites into a cake batter or folding blueberries into pancake batter; folding is a gentler action than mixing or whisking.

grate: to reduce food, like a carrot, to very small shreds or pieces of the same size by rubbing it on a tool with an outside surface that has holes with cutting edges (a grater).

measure: to calculate the specific amount of an ingredient required using a measuring tool (like measuring cups or spoons).

whisk: to beat or stir ingredients vigorously with a fork or whisk to mix, blend, or incorporate air.

Equipment

- Oven
- Muffin pan
- Large pot
- Strainer or colander
- Wooden spoon
- Liquid measuring cup
- Dry measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Grater
- Large mixing bowl

- Whisk

Ingredients

Sweet Pea Mac 'n Cheese Cups

- 2 C dried elbow macaroni, or similar tube-shaped pasta **** (for GLUTEN ALLERGY sub gluten-free/nut-free macaroni)****
- 4 C water
- 1 C frozen green peas, thawed
- 8 oz cheddar cheese, for 2 C grated **** (for DAIRY ALLERGY sub dairy-free/nut-free cheese shreds, like Daiya brand)****
- 2 T butter, softened **** (for DAIRY ALLERGY sub dairy-free/nut-free butter, like Earth Balance brand)****
- 3/4 C plain yogurt **** (Omit for DAIRY ALLERGY or sub dairy-free/nut-free plain yogurt)****
- 1/4 C milk **** (for DAIRY ALLERGY sub dairy-free/nut-free milk)****
- 2 large eggs **** (Omit for EGG ALLERGY)****
- 3/4 tsp salt
- 3/4 tsp mustard powder
- 1/4 tsp ground black pepper
- 1 to 2 T all-purpose flour **** (for GLUTEN ALLERGY sub gluten-free/nut-free flour)****
- Nut-free oil or cooking spray to grease cupcake wells

Food Allergen Substitutions

Sweet Pea Mac 'n Cheese Cups

Gluten/Wheat: Substitute gluten-free/nut-free macaroni for dried elbow macaroni. Substitute gluten-free/nut-free flour for all-purpose flour.

Dairy: Substitute dairy-free/nut-free cheese shreds, like Daiya brand. Substitute dairy-free/nut-free butter, like Earth Balance brand. Omit yogurt or substitute dairy-free/nut-free plain yogurt. Substitute dairy-free/nut-free milk.

Egg: Omit eggs.

Instructions

Sweet Pea Mac 'n Cheese Cups

boil + cook + preheat

Bring a large pot of at least **4 cups of water** to a boil and cook **2 cups of dried elbow macaroni** according to package directions (about 8 to 10 minutes). Drain and set aside. Preheat your oven to 350 F.

grate + crack

Have your kids grate **8 ounces of cheddar cheese**, adding 2 cups of the grated cheese to a large mixing bowl. Crack **2 eggs** into the same bowl with the cheese.

measure + whisk

Have your kids measure and whisk together **3/4 cup yogurt, 1/4 cup milk, 2 tablespoons softened butter, 1 teaspoon salt, 3/4 teaspoon mustard powder, 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper,** and **1 to 2 tablespoons flour** into the bowl with the egg and cheese until well blended.

fold + mix

Gently fold your cooked macaroni and **1 cup thawed frozen peas** into the cheese mixture until well mixed.

fill + bake

Spoon mac 'n cheese into the wells on a greased muffin pan and bake for about 25 to 30 minutes, or until the cupcakes are firm to the touch. Cool slightly and then enjoy!

Featured Ingredient: Peas!

Hi! I'm Peas!

"Hi, there! Let's see if you can guess what we are. We grow in shells; you might see us frozen in winter, fresh in spring, and canned all year round; and sometimes we're "split" and cooked in soup! You guessed it! We're Peas! We're good in salads, soups, casseroles, mixed with corn and other vegetables, and all by ourselves! We can be tricky to eat, but if we slide off your fork, you can spear us or use your knife to push us back on. Or, you might even try eating us with chopsticks!"

History

Peas in the wild are found in the Mediterranean Basin, the Middle East, and Central Asia. Archaeological evidence dates peas in Iraq and Turkey to 7,500 BCE. Domesticated peas were developed from wild peas starting in the late Neolithic Era (around 5,000 BCE). Peas are one of the oldest crops to be cultivated. The oldest pea ever found was 3,000 years old and was discovered on the border of Burma and Thailand. During the Middle Ages, peas were a large part of people's diets in the Middle East, North Africa, and Europe.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, peas started being picked when they were green and immature. In

England, new cultivars or varieties of peas were developed that they called "garden" or "English" peas. Thomas Jefferson grew more than 30 pea cultivars at his Monticello estate in Virginia.

Clarence Birdseye, known by many as the founder of the modern frozen food industry, was the first individual to freeze peas.

The world record for the most peas eaten in an hour is 7,175 peas, held by Janet Harris of Sussex, England, in 1984. She ate one pea at a time with chopsticks!!

Anatomy & Etymology

Peas are members of the Fabaceae or Leguminosae family, commonly known as legumes, including peanuts, chickpeas, licorice, alfalfa, beans, carob, and soybeans.

Peas are edible, usually green, round seeds that grow in a pod. The pea pods are technically a fruit because they have seeds and grow from a flower, but peas are eaten as a vegetable.

Pea plants are annual plants, living for about one year. At the end of their life cycle, they can be cut back to the root, which decomposes, releasing nitrogen into the soil for the next crop of plants.

The singular term "pea" was back-formed in the mid 17th century by removing the "se" from the word "pease," which was mistakenly construed as a plural form. "Pease" came from the Old English "pise," from the Latin "pisum," from the Greek "pison."

How to Pick, Buy, & Eat

You can pick garden peas about three weeks after flowering. The pods of shelling peas or garden peas are inedible and will swell with the growth of the peas, becoming cylindrical before harvesting.

Snow peas and sugar snap peas are edible pods ready to harvest about a week after flowering. The pods can be picked when they're about two to three inches long before they begin to swell and just as the seeds or peas begin to develop.

For the best taste, you'll want to eat the peas as soon after harvesting as possible. Fresh peas will last in your refrigerator for up to one week. The more peas you pick, the more the plant will produce.

Frozen peas are almost as tasty as fresh ones because the growers freeze them within two and a half hours of being picked. Plus, they quickly thaw when added to hot foods.

You can cook and serve peas alone as a vegetable, with added butter and salt. You can also add them to various dishes, such as salads, soups, casseroles, and savory pies. Snow peas and snap peas are often used in stir-fries and Chinese cuisine. Peas can even be mashed and made into a sauce, a spread, or guacamole!

Nutrition

Peas are loaded with nutrients, including fiber, protein, vitamin C, thiamine, vitamin K, niacin, folate, potassium, and beta carotene. These nutrients improve the body's digestive and immune systems, convert the carbohydrates we eat into energy, metabolize fats and protein, protect skin and eyes, and help prevent bleeding.