

Health Benefits of Split Peas



Split peas belong to the family of legumes alongside beans and lentils. Like their family members, split peas are a good source of protein and fiber, especially soluble fiber. They contain nutrients and compounds that support health and prevent chronic diseases like diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, inflammation, osteoporosis and cancer.

Split peas are dried, round peas that split naturally, making them faster for cooking. Green and yellow varieties are most common. Green split peas have a higher content of chlorophyll which also gives them a stronger flavor than the yellow variety.

WHAT MAKES SPLIT PEAS GREAT?

Nutrition

- 1/2 cup cooked split peas provides 116 Calories, 8 gm protein, 8 gm fiber, no fat, no cholesterol

Protein

Like all legumes, split peas are a good source of protein. The 8 gms in 1/2 cup split peas is equivalent to that found in 1 ounce of meat, 1 egg or an 8 oz glass of milk. The advantage to this protein is that split peas contain no fat or cholesterol.

Vitamins

Split peas are rich in several B vitamins. Thiamin (B1) is important for energy metabolism and growth. Pantothenic acid (B5) helps break down fats and folate (B9) is important for protein metabolism and formation of DNA.

Minerals

Phosphorus is a component of bones, teeth and cell membranes and is key in energy production.

Magnesium is important for protein synthesis, muscle and nerve function, blood glucose control and blood pressure regulation. It is also a structural component of bone and plays a role in maintaining a normal heart rhythm.

Copper is essential for energy production, iron metabolism and creating neurotransmitters. It is also involved in gene expression and immune function.

Manganese is involved in metabolism of amino acids, cholesterol, glucose and carbohydrates. It is essential for bone formation, reproduction, blood clotting and the

immune response.

Molybdenum, trace element for DNA, and for metabolizing drugs and chemical toxins like sulfite preservatives.

Phytonutrients

Phytates found in legumes like split peas have antioxidant and anti-cancer activity, and may protect against kidney stones. They improve immune function by enhancing the production of natural killer cells that kill cancer without destroying healthy cells. Phytates have also been shown to protect against osteoporosis.

Isoflavones are a type of plant-based estrogen that has the ability to arrest cancer cell growth and inhibit malignant activity. They are also associated with maintaining healthy blood vessels, lowering cholesterol, inhibiting bone loss and improving sleep quality.

Fiber

Split peas are a good source of soluble fiber, which has been shown to lower cholesterol and regulate blood sugars. Fiber also contributes to feeling full and can aid in weight management.

BUYING AND USING SPLIT PEAS

Split peas can be found packaged or in bulk bins. They will store for several months in an airtight container in a cool, dark place, or in the refrigerator.

Split peas do not require soaking before cooking. Use 3 cups water or broth to every 1 cup split peas. Bring to boil, then cover and simmer until soft, 30–40 minutes. Split peas will absorb water so check them occasionally and add water as necessary to prevent scorching.



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Using split peas:

- Use split peas instead of lentils for making dahl or pilaf.
- Puree cooked split peas for making sauces for casseroles or gravies for side dishes. Pureed split peas can be used to make vegetable dips or sandwich spreads.
- Try making crunchy split peas for a healthy afterschool snack or as a topping to desserts.

Crunchy Split PeasAdapted from yummys.com**Ingredients:**

1/3 c split peas, soaked in water 4 hours
 1 Tbsp olive oil 1/2 tsp salt 1/2 tsp cumin
 1/4 tsp chili powder 1/4 tsp paprika

Directions:

1. Drain peas and pat dry with paper towel.
2. Over med-high heat, coat skillet with oil.
3. Once pan is hot, add split peas and seasonings, stirring frequently until golden in color and crunchy, about 7-10 minutes.
4. Remove from pan and store in airtight container. They will remain crispy for a few days.

Try using other spices like Cajun spice or cinnamon and sugar.

Split Pea SoupAdapted from simpleveganista.com**Ingredients:**

1 pound green or yellow split peas (2 1/4 c)
 3 large carrots, chopped
 2 celery sticks, chopped
 1 onion, chopped
 2 cloves garlic, minced, or 1/2 tsp garlic powder
 1/4 head cabbage (2 cups), shredded
 2 heaping tsp *herbs de Provence* (or 1 tsp thyme and oregano)
 2 bay leaves, whole
 1 tsp Worcestershire sauce
 4-6 c water or broth
 Salt and pepper to taste
 4 Tbsp fresh parsley, chopped (or 1 Tbsp dried)

Directions:

1. Heat 1/4 c water over medium-high heat an sauté onion 5 min. Add carrots, celery, cabbage and herbs and sauté 3-4 minutes.
2. Add split peas, bay leaves, Worcestershire sauce and broth or water and bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer on medium-low 2 hours, stirring occasionally.
3. Remove bay leaves and add in fresh parsley.
4. Use an immersion blender to puree soup or mash until creamy. Salt and pepper to taste.

See website for slow cooker or Instant pot directions.

Split Pea Dip or SpreadAdapted from OneGreenPlanet.org**Ingredients:**

1 1/2 c yellow split peas
 3-4 c water
 1/4 c yellow onion, cut in large chunks
 1/2 c carrot, cut in 2-3 pieces
 2 Tbsp olive oil
 1 Tbsp oregano
 1 cloves garlic
 1 pinch of turmeric
 14 c finely chopped red onion
 Juice from 1 lemon and 1/2 orange

Directions:

1. Simmer split peas on low with water, oregano, turmeric, carrot, yellow onion, mashed garlic cloves and turmeric until mushy.
2. Keep adding water as necessary to get a porridge-like texture (about 1 1/2 hours). Remove from heat. You can remove carrot and onion or keep in for added flavor and nutrition.
3. Mash remaining ingredients with spoon or in food processor.
4. Scoop into bowl and squeeze juice from lemon and orange. Top with salt and pepper.
5. Serve with vegetables, rustic bread or whole grain crackers, or use as spread for sandwiches.

REFERENCESNutritiondata.self.comOds.od.nih.gov/factsheetsSciencedirect.com