



Investigating Peas



It's June down on the farm, and Tractor Ted is helping with the pea harvest. Whether frozen or tinned, in their pods or out, peas are a favourite with young children – and great fun to explore.

THIS ACTIVITY...

- enables children to investigate and learn about peas
- helps the development of all five senses
- encourages the exploration of colour, size, texture, temperature, taste and smell
- allows children to investigate difference, similarity and change
- offers lots of opportunity for asking questions, listening and conversation



WHAT TO DO

Share online footage of peas being harvested with your group. If possible, show the children a real pea plant and examine the leaves, stems, tendrils and pods. Collect different types of peas, and introduce activities that focus on the taste, smell, texture and quality of each type. Try the following...

Frozen peas

Examine the ice that surrounds the peas and feel their temperature and texture. What do the children think might happen if they are not stored in the freezer? Leave out a few peas to see if the children's hypothesis is correct, and compare the defrosted peas with the frozen peas. Steam or microwave some of the peas for the children to taste, and compare their temperature with the frozen peas.

Mange tout, sugar snap and pea pods

Let the children taste little pieces of raw mange tout and sugar snap peas. Give them scissors and magnifying glasses, and let them dissect the pea pods. Encourage them to sniff the juice when the pods are cut, listen out for snapping, popping and crunching sounds, and compare the flat mange tout pods with the fat pea pods. Help them to open the mange tout and compare the tiny seeds with the round peas in a regular pod.

Dried peas

Look at the colour and texture of the dried peas. If possible, compare split and whole peas. Leave some of the dried peas to soak overnight and compare their texture with unsoaked peas. Cook the soaked peas, following the instructions on the packet, and let the children taste them. Put some of the dried peas into plastic spice tubes to use as shakers.

Tinned peas

Open the tin in front of the children and show them how the peas are kept in liquid. Sniff the peas and look at their size and colour. Compare tins of processed, garden and mushy peas. Heat some of the peas for the children to taste.



THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

- Choose just one or two types of pea to explore within each session, building up the number of peas you investigate across a week or two.
- Throughout the pea investigations, compare the colour, texture and size of the different peas. For example, a frozen petit pois is a different size and colour from a tinned marrowfat pea.
- Once the children have tasted a few different types of peas (frozen, fresh, tinned, dried), help them to decide which they like best. Encourage older ones to think about the reasons for their choice.
- Discuss with older children why we freeze, tin and dry peas. Investigate the reasons for preserving by leaving some fresh or defrosted peas on a shelf for a few weeks. What happens to them?
- Be very clear with the children about which peas can be tasted. Frozen and tinned peas should only be eaten once properly cooked. Well washed mange tout, sugar snap and fresh peas can be eaten raw. Dried and soaked peas must not be tasted until they have been fully cooked, including boiling fast for ten minutes to remove any toxins.



JINGLE TIME

To the tune of 'Half a Pound of Tuppenny Rice'

Peas for dinner, peas for tea,
Steaming in the stew pot.
Peas for you and peas for me,
Pop goes the pea pod!

Round and crunchy, green and sweet,
Bubbling in the stew pot.
Peas, potato, gravy, meat,
Pop goes the pea pod!

