

Full of Beans

Peas Sir, can I have some more?

Cooking is fun: it helps children to understand more about food and can encourage them to eat more healthily at mealtimes.

Vegetables like beans and peas are easy for children to get involved with, they can see, touch and taste the vegetables and learn a thing or two while they watch you prepare them. So here is an interactive step-by-step guide to preparing beans and peas. At the bottom are two recipe suggestions which you can then cook, with their help, for everyone to enjoy.

First off ask the children to wash their hands thoroughly – clean hands mean clean food!

Tip:

Buy fresh, young beans which can be 'snapped' instead of cut during preparation to encourage the children to help get the vegetables ready. They can even try 'snapping' them into different shapes such as diamonds or squares.

Ready Steady Cooking Kids



A little info for little chefs:

Ask the children to pick up a runner bean, ask them to describe it? What does it remind them of ie a long green snake? How does the skin feel? Is it soft or smooth? Ask them to snap the bean into different shapes and lengths which they can then have on their plate for dinner.

How to prepare runner beans for cooking:

In the sink or a bowl ask the children to wash the beans and top and tail them by 'snapping' off the ends. Over a chopping board ask the children to 'snap' the beans into even-sized diamond pieces before cooking.



A little info for little chefs:

Put a handful of dwarf beans and a few runner beans alongside each other to show the children the difference in their size, shape and feel. Can the children think of a nickname for this bean which will help them remember it?

How to prepare dwarf beans for cooking:

Ask the children to wash then top and tail the beans by snapping off the ends. The beans need to be left whole or chopped into even-sized pieces for cooking and you can ask the children to help with this using the 'snapping' action. After cooking allow a couple of beans to cool so that the children can feel how the skin has changed and they can then taste the sweet flavour.



A little info for little chefs:

These beans are very different to the others, being smaller and more rounded in shape. What do the children think these remind them of? Could it be a pebble at the seaside?

How to prepare broad beans for cooking:

If you've been lucky enough to purchase some small broad bean pods, with the beans inside, then they can be cooked whole, simply ask the children to wash and top and tail (snap) them before cooking. To remove the beans from the pods the children can snap off one end of the pod and split it open to reveal the broad beans.

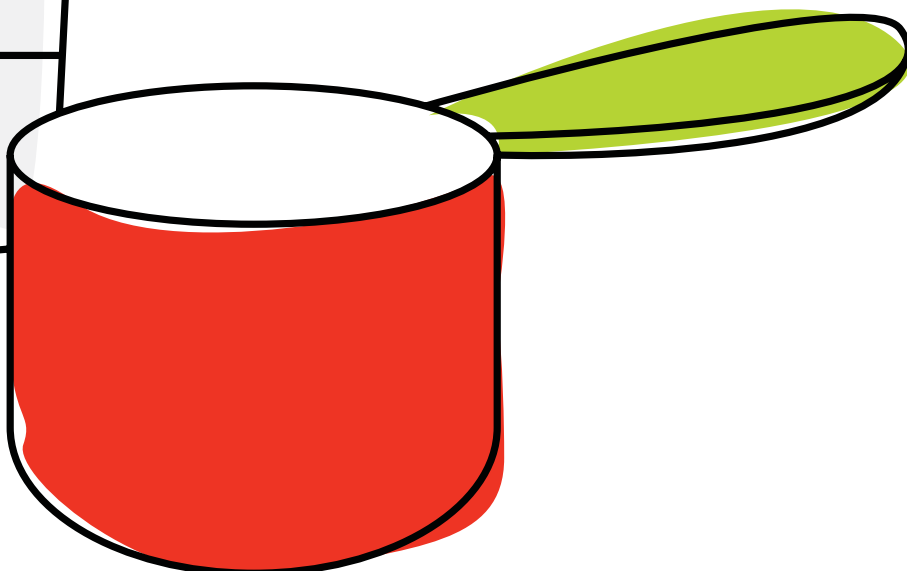
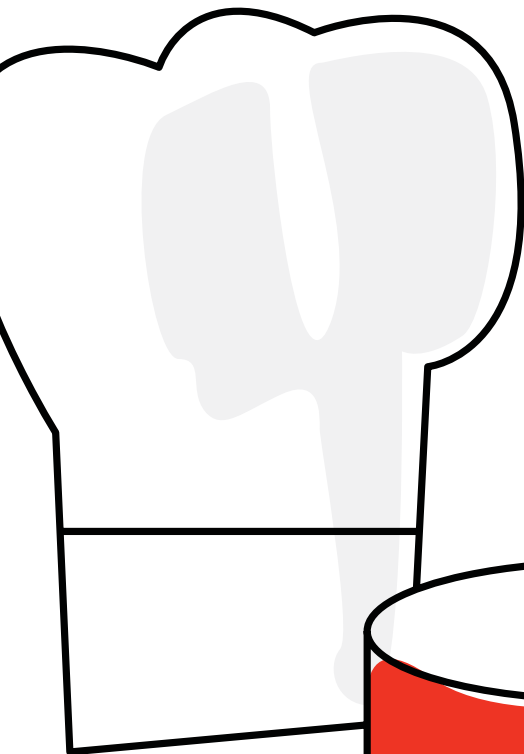


A little info for little chefs:

Obviously you can buy frozen peas, but you can't beat the taste of the real deal. Ask the children to eat a fresh pea straight from the pod and tell you how it tastes? (It should be sweet).

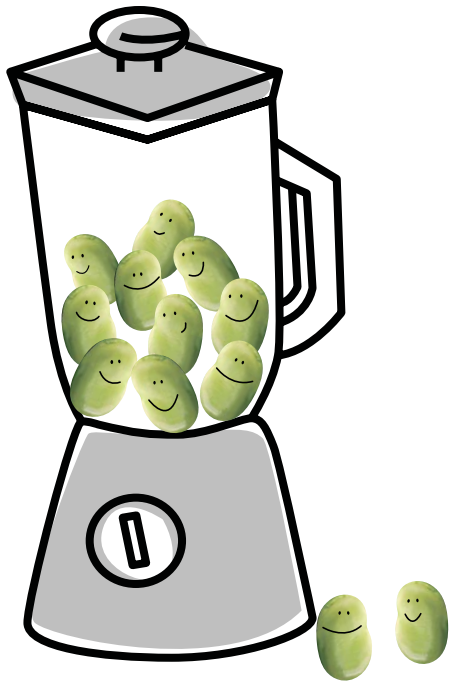
How to prepare peas for cooking:

Podding peas is great fun for children. Just ask them to press their thumb and forefinger into the top of the pod and push the peas out with the thumb. Wash in cold water and they're ready for cooking.



Taste ap-pea-l

Now, here are two recipes which the children can help you with or watch you prepare for dinner. The first is a dip the children can enjoy with a variety of vegetables – a good way to introduce them to new tastes. The second is a contemporary vegetable twist on the traditional fish and chips. **Bon ap-pea-tit!**



MINTY BROAD BEAN DIP

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 5 minutes

Serves: 8 children

Ingredients:

200g podded broad beans

200g Greek yogurt

Small handful of mint leaves

20g Pecorino cheese, grated (or Parmesan)

½ clove garlic, crushed (optional)

Salt and pepper

A selection of vegetable crudités to serve –
carrots, cucumber, celery, peppers, radishes, Little Gem lettuce

Method:

- 1 Cook the broad beans in a pan of boiling water for about 4-5 minutes. Drain and rinse under cold water. The children can help shell the beans and discard the skins (if necessary, small young beans will be fine as they are).
- 2 Ask the children to put the beans, yogurt, mint, cheese and garlic (if using) into a food processor. Let them press 'start' to see the food 'change' into a lovely thick green puree. Season to taste.
- 3 Serve the dip with a selection of colourful vegetable crudités.





PEA PUREE WITH HADDOCK GOUJONS

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 15 minutes

Serves: Family of 4

Ingredients:

For the pea puree:

600g fresh peas
4 tablespoons double cream
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1 teaspoon lemon zest
Salt and pepper

For the haddock goujons:

2 heaped tablespoons flour, seasoned with salt and pepper
1 egg, beaten
100g dried white breadcrumbs
340g haddock fillet, cut across the grain into finger sized strips
Oil for deep frying
Wedges of lemon, to serve

Method:

- 1 First make the pea puree – the children can help. Bring a pan of salted water to the boil, add the peas and cook for 4-5 minutes until tender. Drain the peas and put them into a food processor. Add the cream, lemon juice and zest and whizz for a few seconds to make a thick puree (or you can mash the ingredients together by hand which could be fun for the children to do). Transfer to a warm bowl, season to taste, cover and keep warm while you prepare the fish.
- 2 Put the seasoned flour, egg and breadcrumbs into three separate dishes. With the children, dip the fish strips first in the seasoned flour, then in the beaten egg and finally coat with breadcrumbs. Set aside.
- 3 Pour the oil into a large deep saucepan to a depth of about 5 cm. Carefully heat the oil and when it is ready (when a cube of bread added to the pan sizzles and rises to the surface) add the goujons, a few at a time, and cook until crisp and golden. If you prefer, you could shallow fry the fish although the result won't be as crisp. Remove the cooked fish with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels. Keep warm.
- 4 Divide the pea puree between four plates and top each with haddock goujons. Serve with wedges of lemon and chips or crusty bread, if liked.

