



Venezuelan Cheesy Pea and Corn Arepas

By Erin Fletter

Prep Time 25 / **Cook Time** 14 / **Serves** 4 - 6

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

blend: to stir together two or more ingredients until just combined; blending is a gentler process than mixing.

knead: to work dough by pushing, pulling, and folding it by hand or with a stand mixer.

mash: to reduce food, like potatoes or bananas, to a soft, pulpy state by beating or pressure.

Equipment

- Skillet
- Grater
- Dry measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Wooden spoon
- Liquid measuring cup
- Cutting board + kid-safe knife
- Pancake turner or heat-resistant spatula

Ingredients

Venezuelan Cheesy Pea and Corn Arepas

- 1/2 to 1 C Monterey Jack cheese ******(for DAIRY ALLERGY sub dairy-free/nut-free cheese, like Daiya brand)******
- 1 1/2 C arepa flour (we like Maseca instant corn masa flour)

- 2 T frozen corn kernels, thawed
- 2 T frozen peas, thawed
- 1 pinch salt
- 1 T olive or vegetable oil + extra for cooking
- 1 1/4 C warm water + more if needed

Food Allergen Substitutions

Venezuelan Cheesy Pea and Corn Arepas

Dairy: Substitute dairy-free/nut-free cheese, like Daiya brand, for Monterey Jack cheese.

Instructions

Venezuelan Cheesy Pea and Corn Arepas

grate + measure + mix

Start by grating **1/2 to 1 cup of Monterey Jack cheese**, and set to the side. Then measure and mix together **1 1/2 cups of arepa flour**, **2 tablespoons corn**, **2 tablespoons peas**, **1 pinch of salt**, and **1 tablespoon of olive oil**.

pour + stir + rest

Pour in **1 1/4 cups of warm water** and stir with a spoon until the dough comes together. Add about half of the grated cheese to the dough and stir again. Cover and let the dough rest for 5 minutes.

knead + adjust

Remove the dough from the bowl and knead for about 5 minutes, moistening hands and the board you are kneading on with water as you work. (Kneading in this additional moisture is an important step in making a tender arepa.) The dough should be smooth and not crack around the edges; it should be moist but not sticky. Add 1 tablespoon of water if too dry.

form + cook

Form the dough into disks about 3 inches around and about 1/2-inch thick. Add some olive oil to a skillet on your stovetop and heat over medium heat. Add the arepas to the skillet and cook for about 5 to 7 minutes on each side, just until a golden crust forms.

cool + slice

Remove the arepas from the pan and let cool a bit. Then slice the arepa down the middle, creating a slit to

make a pocket (or slice in half). Stuff your arepas with some of the shredded cheese and Garden Pea Guacamole (see recipe).

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.