

Seasonal Eating
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Add a Pea Salad to Your Cookout
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As the weather warms up and Memorial Day approaches, picnics and cookouts are on the horizon. Whether its burgers and hotdogs or steaks and ribs, a refreshing vegetable salad is the perfect side dish to cool things down and add crunch and freshness to the menu.

Peas are a great spring and early summer vegetable to include in salads and slaws. There are three main types of peas you can use for cooking and in salads. English peas, also known as shelling peas, green peas or garden peas, are the round, fully developed peas that we usually see frozen or canned. Only a small percentage of English peas are sold fresh. The pods are quite fibrous and are inedible so the peas must be shelled. The second type are snap peas or sugar snap peas, which have an edible pod with fully developed peas inside. These do not need to be shelled and are used with the pod. They have a delightfully crisp texture and sweet flavor. They can be used cooked or raw in salads. The third type are snow peas, which have an edible pod, but the peas are not developed, so the pods are flat and wide. These can be used raw in salads, or they are a really good addition to stir fry dishes.



The classic English pea salad consists of peas combined with cheese, bacon and hard cooked eggs with a creamy mayonnaise dressing. Sometimes other ingredients like red onion, ham, celery or ranch dressing are added. English peas are also used in the classic 7-layer salad - another cookout favorite. The exact ingredients can vary but typically include some combination of layers of lettuce, red onion, water chestnuts, celery, bell peppers, cherry tomatoes, hard cooked eggs, shredded cheese and bacon. The dressing is mayonnaise or half mayonnaise and half sour cream with a little sugar added and is spread over the layered vegetables with the cheese and bacon on top. When making this salad, it is important to completely cover the top with the dressing and spread to the edges of the dish as it seals in the freshness so you can make it several hours ahead of time.

In the easy recipe below, green cabbage and English peas are combined with cucumbers and green onions and a dressing of oil, cider vinegar and sugar. It is a great variation on a slaw with a refreshing vinaigrette dressing instead of a creamy, mayonnaise-based dressing. Serve it alongside burgers or barbecued chicken for a crunchy salad with a sweet and tangy flavor that is perfect for warmer weather and spring outings.

Remember that at any cookout or event, only leave the food out for two hours or less before refrigerating. If you are serving outside and the temperature is 90 degrees or more, then it should be 1 hour or less. This will keep your salads fresh and safe.

So, at your next cookout, try some peas in the form of a refreshing salad. For more information and recipes check out the Seasonal Eating page at bedford.tennessee.edu.

Cabbage and Pea Salad

7 1/2 tablespoons olive oil

7 1/2 tablespoons cider vinegar

1 1/2 tablespoons sugar

4 cups thinly shredded green cabbage

½ English cucumber, sliced into half moons

1/2 cup sliced green onion

2 cups frozen green English peas, thawed

kosher salt

black pepper

In a large bowl, whisk together the oil, vinegar and sugar. Add the cabbage, cucumber, green onion and peas. Toss to combine and season with salt and pepper.