

# All About PEANUTS

**PEANUTS** are botanically classified as legumes. Legumes are edible seeds enclosed in pods. Peanuts grow underground, as opposed to nuts like walnuts, almonds, or other nuts that grow on trees. However, for culinary, research and nutritional purposes, peanuts are considered a nut. The peanut plant is generally thought to have originated in South America. The production of peanuts in the U.S. started to rise around the early 1900s. This can be credited to the growing popularity of peanut butter, peanut-based candies, and other peanut products, a need for more plant oils during World War I, and the research of Dr. George Washington Carver.

## Health Benefits

Peanut nutrition plays various roles in metabolism and health. A handful of peanuts is a good source of niacin and manganese and a good source of fiber, phosphorous, vitamin E, folate, copper, and magnesium. Fiber is beneficial to many body functions including contributing to lower levels of total and “bad” LDL cholesterol and improving digestion.

## Purchasing and Preparing

**WHOLE NUTS** Whole peanuts are often eaten as a snack and can be roasted for a variety of flavors. Whole peanuts can also be added to desserts, salads, and pasta dishes for flavor and texture.

**PEANUT OIL** Peanut oil has a pleasing and sometimes light, nutty flavor. It does not absorb the flavor of other foods cooked in the oil. Therefore, several different items can be cooked together and each will maintain their own great taste. Peanut oil is also good for deep-frying as it has a high smoke point.

**FLOUR** Peanut flour contains 40-50% protein, and is a gluten-free and vegan alternative. In addition to replacing wheat flour in traditional recipes, peanut flour can be included in sauces and soups for texture and flavor, as a crumb topping and even blending it into smoothies and shakes to increase the flavor and protein content.



**PEANUT BUTTER** To be classified as real peanut butter, both traditional and “natural” types must contain a minimum of 90% peanuts, with no artificial sweeteners, colors, or preservatives. For added flavor, some commercial brands may also add sugar or salt. Peanut butter is a great addition to sauces and spreads, and paired with other indulgences in rich desserts.

**PEANUT MILK** While not as popular as other nut-milks, peanut milk is a great protein-filled dairy-alternative. Peanut milk is a flavorful addition to coffee, chai teas, and smoothies.

## Interesting Facts

The current top three producers of peanuts are China, India, and the United States.

In the U.S., peanuts and peanut butter are the most popular nut choice and comprise 67% of all nut consumption.

It takes about 540 peanuts to make a 12-ounce jar of peanut butter.

There are six cities in the U.S. named Peanut.

Peanuts contain about 8 grams of cholesterol-free plant protein per ounce, which is more than any other nut.