

# Schreiber & Sons CSA

*It's a Culinary Adventure*

Schreiberandsons.com

May 4, 2009

Week I

**Harvest starts this week.** Finally. After all of my grousing about the weather, we have arrived at a time for deliveries to start. Get ready for an interesting season. Each year the first deliveries have the least items in the boxes and for this year, it is particularly applicable. You will note in a couple of weeks that the box contents are increasing in volume and diversity. Also, we *try* to not flood you with a lot of the same produce and change the contents over time. The majority of the box contents should be familiar to you, but we try to have some items each week that may stretch your limits of culinary familiarity. Some of you are going to be stretched more than others.

**In your box this week:**

**Bulb onions**

**Green onions or leeks**

**Asparagus**

**Spinach**

**Dry peas**

**Chickpeas**

**Pearled barley**

**Cilantro**

**A few points of order.** About once a day I get an email from a CSA member who says they have not been getting the updates. If you know of someone who is not getting the updates, let us know. If you have an organic share, your pick up date is this Tuesday, if you are a conventional member, your pick up date is Thursday. Please try very hard to pick up your box during the appointed time interval. We have asked the pick up site

volunteers to allow a one hour grace period after the pick up time, after which, the contents of the left behind boxes is theirs.

We ask that when you pick up your box next week that you return your box from the previous week to the drop site. Flatten your box. This seems like a little thing, but over the course the season this adds up to about 10,000 box uses. By reusing the boxes is save thousands of dollars and avoids tremendous waste of cardboard. Over time the boxes wear out and we replace them and sometimes people choose to keep them. However, last year we had more than 90% of the boxes returned weekly.

### **A few words about the contents of your box:**

The onions, dry peas, chickpeas, barley were harvested last year and stored. The green onions, leeks, cilantro and spinach were all planted last year and overwintered. The asparagus, of course, was planted a few years ago, is a perennial and is harvested annually for many years in the spring.

Because of the cold weather the spinach has been growing very slowly. It has been frosted, which has caused some of the leaf tips to be misshapen. While the leaves of the spinach look a little twisted, it tastes very, very good.

**The inevitable questions:** Each year we get questions about the produce. In an attempt to preempt some of your questions I am updating my response to questions that came in after the first delivery last year.

**What is the preferred method of washing the produce? Does it need a quick rinse or something more? We aren't sure what will have pesticides and what won't.**

*What is the preferred method of washing the produce?*

This is a great question. A lot of the produce from our CSA will be washed immediately after harvest. For example, the lettuce is washed, dried in a huge salad spinner, picked through for quality control and bagged. The asparagus is washed, sorted a little, checked for quality and bunched. The bok choy is washed and bundled. We try to provide you with produce that has been washed or cleaned. **But** do not assume that the produce you receive is always ready to eat. It is your responsibility to determine if additional washing is necessary.

Everyone has a different standard of what is acceptable. I was raised on a farm and have little aversion to food with dirt on it. I have no qualms about pulling a radish out of the garden, wiping some of the dirt off the root and eating it. I expect that if you examine your salad mix closely you may find a piece of dried stem from last year's crop, a bit of a root, a scrap of a

decayed leaf or something else you do not want to eat. The moral of this story is... do not assume everything we provide you is always ready to eat. If we had the ability to invest in a multimillion processing facility, your greens would be grocery store perfect-in our humble little operation, we have to settle for less than perfection. It is a trade off you make to get local, fresh, great taste and quality.

Now to answer the question..... there is no preferred method of washing produce. It depends on how dirty it is, what it is and a few other items. Leeks should be sliced in half from top to bottom, immersed in water and swished around... remove the leeks from the water and repeat. Do not dump the leeks out of the water, the dirt will settle in the sink or bowl and this will just redeposit what you have worked to remove; just lift the leeks out of the container of water. Asparagus should be rinsed off, the butt end broken (not cut) where it naturally snaps off. Lettuce should be washed, dried and picked through and it is ready to go. Theoretically, the lettuce should be ready to eat, but I am sure that some items will have some extraneous matter. Do not use soap. The rinse chemicals that some companies sell are worthless. Use three things... water, effort and common sense.

*Does it need a quick rinse or something more?*

Ninety percent of the time a quick rinse and some inspection should be sufficient. Sometimes some items such as potatoes and crops in contact with the soil may need a light scrubbing.

*We aren't sure what will have pesticides and what won't.*

This is the question that I could spend the rest of the day responding to.

Bear in mind that theoretically, both the conventional and organic produce could contain pesticide residues.... yes, pesticides are used in organics and in many cases very commonly. A study on pesticide use practices in Washington potatoes found that organically grown potatoes received more applications of pesticides than conventionally grown potatoes. However, organically acceptable pesticides have to be naturally derived and in most cases these products have very low mammalian toxicities and usually are relatively benign environmentally.

For the first part of the season all produce should be pesticide-free; I suspect that for most of the year both the conventional and organic produce should be pesticide free. Eventually the weeds, insects and diseases will rear their ugly, ugly heads, buds and hyphae, but until then we go to some lengths to refrain from pesticide use. We try to strictly limit pesticide use and when we do, we use the safest methods. While I have several people who work for me on the farm, I do virtually all of the pesticide applications for the CSA. It is a responsibility I take seriously.

I have not a single qualm about using pesticides; I do not think I ever met one I did not like, but pesticides have their place and the CSA is a place to minimize their use.

**Let me count the reasons why we minimize the use of pesticide.**

1) Pesticides have something called REIs or restricted entry intervals. Once you apply a pesticide, you cannot go back into that area for 12 to 72 hours and for some products it is up to 7 days. We are going into our fields, beds, rows and orchards every day, usually many times a day. We cannot stay out long.

2) Pesticides have something called PHIs or preharvest intervals. Once you apply a pesticide you have to wait a certain length of time before you can harvest the crop. These times range from 0 to 14 or more days. We are harvesting asparagus, bok choy, lettuces, etc almost every day now. For crops that we are harvesting or may be about ready to harvest, pesticides are out of the question.

3) In our style of growing, we plant a very wide diversity of crops. When you plant a mosaic of crops, insects and sometimes diseases, have a more difficult time becoming established. This reduces the likelihood the pest outbreaks occur and it reduces the need for pesticides. Thank goodness the CSA style of growing reduces pest problems. If we did have huge pest problems, I am not sure what we would do.

4) There are some things we can do in lieu of pesticides, such as hand weeding, hand picking of insects, etc. Last year, Julian our six year old son, literally picked the Colorado potato beetles off the potato plants.

5) We know that many of our members would rather us use pesticides minimally, so that is what we do.

Bear in mind that eventually there will be some pesticide use. You almost can't escape it in some cases, both in the conventional and organic production. There is an indigenous leafhopper called the beet leafhopper and it transmits both a virus and a phytoplasma. (It is a long story to explain what these are, even the names are long, the curly top virus and beet leafhopper transmit virescens agent or BLTVA.) If we do not use something to protect the tomatoes, we will lose our crop. What we try to do is make our applications prior to the time when fruit is on the plant so there will be no residues on the fruit. Also, we are using a very cool new product that naturally stimulates the plants immune system to make it resistant to the disease once it has been introduced in the plant. If this works, it will be a very promising tool.

The bottom line is that we think about things like pest control, pesticide use and what our customers want. The value system that each of you has runs the gamut from spray it until the bugs are dead, dead, dead, all the way to those who want zero pesticides, organic or otherwise. We will not please everyone, but we will try. We give lots of thought to this and we want pesticides to be one thing you do not worry about. We want you to spend your time thinking about what to do with radicchio, not whether it has pesticides on it.

I do not want to wave credentials around and come across like, *just take my word for it* . . . however, let me also say, I went to school for a very long time. After I graduated from high school back in Missouri, I spent four years on an undergraduate degree, three years working on a Masters degree and then another four years working on a Ph.D. My Ph.D. is in entomology (insects) and pesticide toxicology. I used to work at the Environmental Protection Agency in Washington, D.C. and as a professor at WSU, in both positions as a pesticide expert. I say this not to establish my credentials but to let you know that I know something about pesticides and I want every member of our CSA to be comfortable with our policy on pesticides. Worry about what to do with bok choy or whether your kids will eat Swiss chard, but don't worry about the pesticides.

#### **SPLIT GREEN PEAS**

Dried peas have been consumed since prehistoric times. They probably originated in northwest Asia and were found in caves in Thailand that are over 11,000 years old. Fossilized remains of peas were found at archeological sites in Swiss lake villages, and the legume is mentioned in the Bible and was prized by the ancient civilizations of Egypt, Greece and Rome. The split peas you are receiving today are from the 2006 crop and come from Genesee Union, in Idaho. The Palouse is known for producing the highest quality peas, lentils and chickpeas in the United States. We don't get to visit our friends over there often enough, but make it a point to be there for a few days during harvest—so Julian may have been on the combine that gathered the product in your box.

There are hundreds of varieties of peas; all are spherical, a feature that sets them apart from beans and lentils. Dried peas are produced by harvesting the peapods when they are fully mature and dried naturally by the sun. During cleaning and sorting, the skins are removed and they split naturally, which speeds cooking time. Americans are most familiar with green peas, but yellow peas are also grown in the Palouse. They are most commonly consumed in Scandinavia and taste slightly different than green peas.

**Nutritional Value:** Peas and lentils are packed with so much fiber, protein, and other nutrients that the USDA recommends that legumes be consumed as both a meat and vegetable selection. Based on a 2,000 calorie diet, an adult should consume 2 ½ cups of vegetables and 5 ½ oz of meat and beans every day. You can stock up on vegetables with peas and lentils and you can stock up meat with peas and lentils.

Peas are a high protein food and a good source of potassium, two B-vitamins, and protein—all with virtually no fat. Peas, lentils, and chickpeas are also a good source of folate, a nutrient may help to stave off heart attacks, strokes and even birth defects (such as spina bifida).

Split peas, and chickpeas are good sources of important [minerals](#) like iron, magnesium, and zinc. They provide [antioxidants](#) such as Vitamin A and Vitamin C, which bind with and destroy free radicals, reducing oxidative damage to cells. The presence of phytochemicals in legumes is another reason why we should eat legumes regularly. Plants use [phytochemicals](#) to protect themselves from insects, disease, drought, and radiation. The body uses phytochemicals to fend off disease.

Check a chart of the fiber content in foods and you'll see legumes leading the pack. A single cup of cooked dried peas provides 65.1% of the daily value for fiber. Soluble fiber forms a gel-like substance in the digestive tract that binds bile (which contains cholesterol) and carries it out of the body. Not only can dried peas help lower cholesterol, they are also of special benefit in managing blood-sugar disorders since their high fiber content prevents blood sugar levels from rising rapidly after a meal.

And finally, are you sensitive to sulfites? Dried Peas May Help. Dried peas are an excellent source of the trace mineral, molybdenum, an integral component of the enzyme sulfite oxidase, which is responsible for detoxifying sulfites. Sulfites are a type of preservative commonly added to prepared foods like delicatessen salads and salad bars. Persons who are sensitive to sulfites in these foods may experience rapid heartbeat, headache or disorientation if sulfites are unwittingly consumed. If you have ever reacted to sulfites, it may be because your molybdenum stores are insufficient to detoxify them. A cup of cooked dried peas provides 196.0% of the daily value for molybdenum.

**History:** The modern-day garden pea, from which dried peas are made, is thought to have originated from the field pea that was native to central Asia and Europe. For millennia, dried peas were the main way that people consumed this legume. It was not until the 16th century when cultivation techniques created more tender varieties of garden peas that people began to consume peas in their fresh state as opposed to just eating dried peas. It seems that the Chinese, a culture that had consumed this legume as far back as 2,000 BC, were the first ones to consume both the seeds and the pods as a vegetable. Peas were introduced into United States soon after the colonists first settled in this country.

In the 19th century during the early developments of the study of genetics, peas played an important role. The monk and botanist, Gregor Mendel used peas in his plant breeding experiments. Today the largest commercial producers of dried peas are Russia, France, China and Denmark. Peas are grown in The Palouse as a rotational crop to put nitrogen back into the soil. Along with lentils and chickpeas, they form the foundation of rotational crops for wheat farmers, boosting yields and breaking soil disease cycles.

**Storage:** Dried peas will keep indefinitely if stored in an airtight container in a cool, dry, dark place. After long storage (or storage in light) their color may fade slightly, but their taste will not be noticeably altered. Long storage MAY increase cooking time.

**Use:** Before preparing dried peas, whether whole or split, inspect and remove any debris or dirt. Whole peas need to be soaked in cold water for at least eight hours before cooking, while split peas do not need this extra preparation. To prepare peas, place the legumes in a saucepan using at least 2 ½ cups of fresh water for each cup of peas. Bring to a boil and then reduce to a simmer and cover. Whole peas generally take about an hour to become tender while split peas only take about 30 minutes. Foam may form during the first 15 minutes of cooking, which can simply be skimmed off.

**A Few Quick Serving Ideas:** Split pea soup is a timeless favorite, however, don't limit yourself. Dry peas can also be used in a variety of other soups, salads and side dishes. If you can't find a recipe that suits your pallet in the brochures we included, check the USA Dry Pea and Lentil website for many more.

[www.pea-lentil.com](http://www.pea-lentil.com)

## Barley

Today you are receiving pearl barley from the Palouse. Pearl Barley or Pearled Barley is the most common form of barley available today. The hulls, including the bran, have been removed leaving the grains with a pearly white color. The polishing process involves scouring the barley six times during milling to completely remove the outer inedible hull and the bran layer. Pearled barley cooks in less time than the whole grain hulled form, however, many of its nutrients are removed along with the bran. Still, pearl barley is rich in protein and high in fiber. Barley is a versatile cereal grain with a rich nutlike flavor and a chewy, pasta-like consistency, the result of its gluten content. Its appearance resembles wheat berries, although it is slightly lighter in color. Sprouted barley is naturally high in maltose, a sugar that serves as the basis for both malt syrup sweetener and when fermented, as an ingredient in beer and other alcoholic beverages.

Compared to other grains, barley is just about the toughest grain in the field. Barley will grow in many areas of the world where wheat will not thrive. It is a very hardy perennial with a relatively short growing season, maturing in about three months. These hardy qualities permit barley to tolerate flooding, drought conditions, and even frost. An added bonus for the farmer is this amazing grain's ability to resist insect infestation.

Cultivated for over 10,000 years, it is one of the oldest domesticated grain crops. Through these many years, more than 200 varieties of barley were developed. At present, barley is the world's fourth most important crop and an important staple in many countries. The largest commercial producers of barley are Canada, the United States, the Russian Federation, Germany, France and Spain. Though the U.S. is the third largest producer of barley, only a small portion reaches the table in its grain form. Almost half the United States crop of barley is used for brewing beer and most of the rest is used for feeding livestock.

## Preparation and Use

Barley can be used in place of rice in almost any dish. And although mainly thought of as an ingredient in soups, barley grits are great for breakfast, and pearled or hulled barley is perfect for salads, side dishes or as the primary ingredient in main dishes and even desserts.

Like all grains, before cooking barley, rinse it thoroughly under running water and then remove any dirt or debris that you may find. After rinsing, add one part barley to three and a half parts boiling water or broth. After the liquid has returned to a boil, turn down the heat, cover and simmer. Pearled barley should be simmered for about one hour, while hulled barley should be cooked for about 90 minutes.

## Storing

It's always best to store grains in airtight containers. Unrefrigerated, barley will keep for six to nine months. If the grains are stored in the refrigerator, they will keep several months longer.

## Nutritional Value

The British employ barley in a number of folk remedies, claiming that barley water will settle an upset stomach. They have also rumored that barley water is the secret behind the beautiful complexions of their British women. Today, barley's claim to nutritional fame is based on it being a very good source of fiber and selenium and a good source of phosphorus, copper and manganese. Calcium, potassium, and phosphorous are also present in significant amounts.

Barley's fiber has multiple beneficial effects on cholesterol and can prevent or improve a number of different conditions including high blood sugar levels in people with diabetes, various cancers and even gallstones.

Though oats contain beta-glucan and have been advertised as the great panacea for lowering cholesterol, some varieties of barley contain up to three times the level of beta-glucans as most varieties of oats.

Food	Fiber Content in Grams
Oatmeal, 1 cup	3.98
Whole wheat bread, 1 slice	2
Whole wheat spaghetti, 1 cup	6.3
Brown rice, 1 cup	3.5
Barley, 1 cup	13.6
Buckwheat, 1 cup	4.54
Rye, 1/3 cup	8.22
Corn, 1 cup	4.6
Apple, 1 medium with skin	5.0
Banana, 1 medium	4.0
Blueberries, 1 cup	3.92
Orange, 1 large	4.42

Pear, 1 large	5.02
Prunes, 1/4 cup	3.02
Strawberries, 1 cup	3.82
Raspberries, 1 cup	8.36

\*Fiber content can vary between brands.

Yet another reason to increase your intake of barley is that barley is also a good source of niacin, a B vitamin that provides numerous protective actions against cardiovascular risk factors.

For people worried about colon cancer risk, barley packs a double punch by providing the fiber needed to minimize the amount of time cancer-causing substances spend in contact with colon cells, plus being a very good source of selenium, which has been shown to reduce the risk of colon cancer significantly. A cup of cooked barley provides 52% of the daily value for selenium. Selenium is an essential component of several major metabolic pathways, including thyroid hormone metabolism, antioxidant defense systems, and immune function.

Copper, another trace mineral supplied by barley, may also be helpful in reducing the symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis. One cup of cooked barley provides 32% of the daily value for copper. The phosphorus provided by barley plays a role in the structure of every cell in the body. A cup of cooked barley will give you 23% of the daily value for phosphorus.

### History

A glass of beer, a loaf of bread, a bowl of porridge, a standard of measurement, a form of currency, a medication--they all began with barley. Barley, an ancient grain possibly even older than rice, originated in Ethiopia and Southeast Asia, where it has been cultivated for more than 10,000 years. During the latter part of the Stone Age, early man was sprinkling grains of barley over various foods, adding a chewy, nutty quality to his meals. The grain was used by ancient civilizations as a food for humans and animals, as well as to make alcoholic beverages; the first known recipe for barley wine dates back to 2800 BC in Babylonia. In addition, since ancient times, barley water has been used for various medicinal purposes. (Don't forget the line in the Nanny song from Mary Poppins, "Never smell of barley water . . .")

Ancient cultures were forming loaves of barley bread long before domesticating wheat. Since barley contains only miniscule quantities of gluten, the protein that makes wheat breads rise easily, the breads made from this grain were heavy and quite dense but nutritious nonetheless. Our cultivated barley of today was once a wild grass that originated in the Near East, though some food historians believe China was the place of origin, while others say it was Ethiopia. Archeologists discovered remnants of wild barley, *H. spontaneum*, at many sites across a belt that stretches from North Africa on the west to Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan in the east.

Egyptian hieroglyphics dating back to 5,000 BC mention barley's importance to sustenance. To many Egyptian workers barley meant life. The enslaved people who built the pyramids endured intense desert heat, heavy labor lifting huge stones, and dawn to dusk hours on a spartan diet. Their meals consisted of a mere three loaves of barley bread a day and an allotment of beer--made from barley. The earliest brewing methods of using barley to brew beer, originating in Mesopotamia, actually began with barley bread made from sprouted grains. Since the crop was also the primary grain of the Hebrews it is not

surprising that it was mentioned in the Bible. The Babylonians created the oldest known recipe for making barley wine and inscribed the directions in a cross-shaped form on a library brick dating back to 2,800 BC. Barley continued to play an important role in ancient Greek culture as a staple bread-making grain as well as an important food for athletes. Roman athletes continued this tradition of honoring barley for the strength that it gave them. Gladiators were known as hordearii, which means "eaters of barley." The grain journeyed into China before wheat and was honored in the country as a symbol of male virility since the heads of barley are heavy and contain numerous seeds.

Historians report that up until the 16th century, barley was the most important grain on the European continent. Since wheat was very expensive and not widely available in the Middle Ages, many Europeans made bread from a combination of barley and rye. The Spanish introduced barley to South America in the 16th century, while the English and Dutch settlers of the 17th century brought it with them to the United States. Since wheat and corn were plentiful in North America, barley was never used for baking bread. It gained its popularity as an important ingredient for making beer.

Barley malt, used as a sweetener, originated in China before it became popular and used almost exclusively as a sweetener in Japan. Today, pearl barley is a favorite of the Japanese, while the grain is highly valued in Tibet and surrounding areas of the Himalayas for its ability to grow successfully in those high altitudes where weather conditions are extreme.

## **As a measure and currency**

Barley was so highly valued that many civilizations used it as a form of currency and measure. The Sumerians note the use of barley for measurement and money on their cuneiforms dating back 3500 BC. And in the Code of Hammurabi, 1750 BC, the Babylonians employed barley as simple monetary exchange.

From the 1300s to the 1700s the barleycorn standard of measurement became the foundation of the measurement system that existed in Great Britain and America. In about 1305, Edward I of England decreed that one inch should be the measure of three barleycorns, and English shoe sizing began; thus a child's shoe that measured 13 barleycorns became a size 13. The term barleycorn, originally barli-corn, can be traced back to the Anglo-Saxon era in England about the fifth and sixth centuries through the eleventh century. It was then that farming communities relied on this grain as a unit of measurement as well as weight. The word barleycorn referred to each grain of barley as a unit of length equal to 1/3-inch or about 8.5 millimeters, with about 3 barleycorns laid end to end equal to one Anglo-Saxon ynce, which later became "inch." Twelve of these ynces was determined as one foot, or 36 barleycorns, or the running foot at 39 barleycorns.

The term originally used for the weighing of barleycorn is "grain," eventually becoming "gram" in the metric system. This term existed before the troy and avoirdupois weight systems.

### ***Southwest Barley Salad***

***From January/February 2005 "Country Woman"***

3 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth	1/2 cup chopped green onions
3/4 cup uncooked medium pearl barley	1/2 cup minced fresh cilantro
1 cup fresh or frozen corn	1 garlic clove, minced
1 cup canned black beans, rinsed and drained	1/2 cup salsa
3/4 cup chopped sweet red pepper	3 Tbs. reduced-fat sour cream
1/2 cup chopped green pepper	2 Tbs. lime or lemon juice

In a saucepan, bring broth to a boil. Stir in barley. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 40 to 45 minutes or until tender. Drain and cool. In a large bowl, combine the corn, beans, peppers, onions, cilantro and garlic. Stir in barley.

Just before serving, combine the salsa, sour cream and lime juice; add to barley mixture. Serve warm or cold. Yield 6 servings. Diabetic Exchange: 2 starch, 1 vegetable

#### CHICKPEA

**Botanical name:** *Cicer arietinum* L.

Chickpeas, or garbanzo beans, were originally cultivated on the lands bordering Mesopotamia and the eastern Mediterranean. From there they spread to India and some parts of East Asia. In ancient Rome, the chickpea was so highly valued that one leader (Cicero) was proud to claim his family name came from the Latin term for it, *Cicer arietinum*.

Although chickpeas can be reddish or black, the buff-colored variety is the one most widely used. Chickpeas have a unique spherical shape with the hint of a tail, purportedly resembling a ram's head. The two most common types of chickpea, are the white-seeded "Kabuli" and the "Desi". Chickpea is an important source of protein in the diets of the poor regions of the world and is particularly important in vegetarian diets. Chickpeas are being used increasingly as a substitute for animal protein and are gaining in popularity in the United States, thanks to increased interest in ethnic cuisine, and can often be found on salads to boost protein levels.

Chickpeas, peas and lentils are rotation crops to wheat and barley. Planted in alternate years, these rotation crops replenish nitrogen in the soil, reducing or eliminating the need for chemical fertilizers. The chickpeas you are receiving today are known as Billy Beans in the United States. They are called Pedro Sillano in Spain, where Bill Newbry, Genesee, Idaho, found them during his travels. He was so impressed, he brought the "beans" home to the United States and gave them to his growers to propagate. These peas (actually more closely related to peas than beans as the "garbanzo bean" nickname suggests) are last year's crop brought to you from a grower in Genesee. (Our son may have been on the combine that harvested them.)

Billy Beans have become favored chickpeas for the processed market both for their flavor and because they have a minimal seed coat, which results in a smoother hummus. Their smaller size results in a quicker cooking time (about 2 hours, versus at least three for the conventional Dwelley or Sanford chickpea).

Most recipes call for canned chickpeas, however, dried can be cooked and used in place of canned in any recipe. I put chickpeas in lentil chili, bean soup and have even had a chickpea pizza that was great. The hummus recipe enclosed is the most common use in our household.

**Nutrition:** Chickpeas as well as other legumes are high in fiber and an excellent source of: Folate (160mcg), Vitamin B6 (1.13mg), Vitamin C (9mg), and Zinc (2.54mg). Chickpeas, lentils, and peas are among the select group of foods that provide protein as well as calcium and iron.

**Selection and storage:** Choose pale tan chickpeas with uniform color. Store dried chickpeas in an airtight container.

**Preparation, uses, and tips:** Cooked chickpeas are the main ingredient, along with sesame paste, in hummus, the popular Middle Eastern spread. Before cooking, soak chickpeas for 12 hours, then pressure-cook for 20 to 25 minutes, or boil them for 2 1/2 hours (soaking and cooking times are less with Billy Beans). Chickpeas nearly triple in size after soaking and cooking. They have a unique, pungent flavor when cooked, blending well with garlic and onions. Chickpeas can be roasted as a snack or ground into flour.

**A few basics about cooking dry peas, lentils and chickpeas**

*(Taken directly from the USA Dry Pea and Lentil Cookbook)*

The first step in your preparation process is ensuring that the peas, lentils and chickpeas you are using are of United States origin. Peas, lentils and chickpeas from other origins such as Canada, Turkey, and India are known to have higher levels of foreign matter and may take much longer to cook because of hard seed problems (a result of harvesting at higher moisture rates before the product is fully matured). Peas and lentils from the United States are dried naturally in the sun and harvested at low moisture rates resulting in a product that does not require soaking. In fact, soaking peas and lentils from the United States will likely result in overcooking the product (Note: chickpeas, regardless of origin, still need to be soaked prior to cooking.) Cooking times may vary slightly depending upon the variety. Times given are approximations, and you should adjust them to meet your needs. High altitude, hard water, and salt added to the cooking water will increase cooking time.

**Preparation of Chickpeas**

In a medium size pan, combine 1 cup of soaked chickpeas and 2 ½ cups of water. Add more water if you are cooking at high altitude or with hard water. Bring to a boil, cover and simmer until the chickpeas are tender.

Many people prefer to use canned chickpeas because of the convenience. However, some find a noticeable difference between canned chickpeas and those they prepare. The difference is typically noticeable in dishes that most bring out the taste of the chickpeas, such as hummus. Try both forms to find which you prefer. One 15-ounce can contains a scant 2 cups.

**Chickpea cooking times: Chickpea yield:**

All uses, from dried: 1 ½ to 2 hours 1 cup dry: 2 cups cooked