

DATE: March 23, 2017

Karan's Korner

MARCH IS.....

NATIONAL PEANUT AND NUTRITION MONTH

March is a month filled with many food events and activities. Besides being National Nutrition Month, March is also National Peanut Month. National Peanut Month had its beginnings as National Peanut Week in 1941. It was expanded to a month-long celebration in 1974.

The peanut (*Arachis hypogaea*) is actually not really a nut - it is a legume, the same family as beans and peas. There are six cities in the U.S. named Peanut: Peanut, California; Lower Peanut, Pennsylvania; Upper Peanut, Pennsylvania; Peanut, Pennsylvania, Peanut, Tennessee; and Peanut, West Virginia. Boiled Peanuts were designated as the Official Snack Food of South Carolina in 2006.

Peanuts originated in South America, where they were cultivated by Indians for at least 2000 years. As early as 1500 B.C., the Incans used peanuts as sacrificial offerings and entombed them with their mummies to aid in the spirit life. Spaniards and Portuguese slave traders introduced them to Africa and Europe, and slaves introduced them to the American South.

Though there are several varieties of peanut, the two most popular are the Virginia and the Spanish peanut. The Virginia peanut is larger and more oval in shape than the smaller, rounder

Spanish peanut. Unshelled peanuts should have clean, unbroken shells and should not rattle when shaken.

Dr. George Washington Carver researched and developed more than 300 uses for peanuts in the early 1900s; Dr. Carver is considered "The Father of the Peanut Industry" because of his extensive research and selfless dedication to promoting peanut production and



products. The U.S. produced about 4.1 billion pounds of peanuts in 2004. The U.S. produces only about 6% of the world crop.

In the U.S., annual peanut production (about 1.5 million tons per year) often exceeds the production of beans and peas combined.

Historically, the largest producer of peanuts in the world was India, but production in China overtook Indian production in the mid-1990s. For the period 1996 to 2000, China produced almost 40% of the world crop, and India almost 25%, with the U.S. in 3rd place with almost 6% Worldwide, about 2/3rds of the peanut crop is processed for peanut oil. 20% of the world's peanut production is used in candy. Peanut oil accounts for 8% of the world's edible oil production.

Americans eat 3 pounds of peanut butter per person every year. That's about 700 million pounds, or enough to coat the floor of the Grand Canyon! One acre of peanuts will make 30,000 peanut butter sandwiches. One acre of peanut plants yields about 2,860 pounds of peanuts.

Two peanut farmers have been elected President of the United States: Thomas Jefferson and Jimmy Carter.

Peanuts are also called goobers, goober peas, pindars, ground nuts, earth nuts, monkey nuts, and grass nuts.

Since March is National Nutrition month and National Peanut month, I must inform you of the great Nutritional value of the Peanut. Peanuts are classified in the meat and protein group because of the fantastic protein value. Peanuts contain about 28% protein, 50% oil and 18% carbohydrates. A serving size of peanut butter is two tablespoons. Peanuts and peanut butter is very versatile in food preparation and cooking. The most popular sandwich for children is peanut butter and jelly. The number one way cooks use peanut butter is in Peanut Butter Cookies. You can use Peanuts and Peanut Butter in hundreds of ways when cooking from salads, entrees, and desserts. During this month experiment and try different ways of using peanuts and peanut butter.

In closing I want to share some facts about that famous icon MR. PEANUT. Mr. Peanut was created by 13 year-old Antonio Gentile in a logo contest held by Planters in 1916. He won the grand prize of \$5.00. His drawing of a peanut person with arms and crossed legs was refined by a professional illustrator who added the top hat, monocle, white gloves and cane.

When I taught Family and Consumer Science in school this was one of my favorite recipes to have the student prepare because of the nutritional value, it makes a good snack and is versatile.



Ingredients:

1 cup peanut butter (smooth)

1 cup graham cracker crumbs (or rice krispies, oatmeal)

1 tablespoon of powdered milk

2 tablespoon butter or margarine

1 cup powdered sugar

1/4 cup corn syrup

1/4 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips, melted (optional), sprinkles (optional)

Directions:

In a large bowl, combine the peanut butter, graham cracker crumbs, sugar powdered milk, butter and corn syrup. Mix until smooth.

Shape the dough into 1-inch balls. Place the dough balls on waxed paper-lined cookie sheets. Drizzle melted chocolate over balls and put sprinkles on top. Or, delete the chocolate and just roll the PB balls in sprinkles. Store in a covered container and refrigerate.

A reminder that the Dinner Tonight Healthy Cooking School is today March 23, 2017 at the Large Community Hall. Doors Open at 5:30 for viewing the vendors and exhibits. The program starts at 6:00-8:00 p.m. with food demonstrations. The Matthies-Bennett 4-H Scholarship Auction is on Saturday April 1, 2017 at Pecos County Coliseum, Fort Stockton, Texas. We will be receiving items at the coliseum on March 29 and 30 from 8:00-5:00, and Friday, March31, from 8:00-12:00 noon.

If you have questions or would like to share some of your tips for working and living in Pecos County with our readers, please call me at the Pecos County AgriLife Extension Services, 432-336-2541. Make sure you check us out on the web or face book.

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