

# FOOD

Los Angeles Sentinel

## DIP IT OR DUNK IT, SLAP IT OR SLATHER IT:

# PEANUT BUTTER

## MAKES A VERSATILE AFTER-SCHOOL TREAT

If back to school means back to fixing after-school snacks, the peanut growers from Texas have some big ideas just for you. They're also offering 10 timely tips for helping youngsters develop A-plus homework habits.

It's a fact that kids of all ages love peanut butter. Each and every day, 50 million people enjoy the spread in some form — whether as part of America's favorite sandwich, as the key ingredient in a snack recipe or as the smooth topping to a crunchy base.

While peanut butter has been around for more than 100 years, many parents are just discovering that it offers a tasty enticement for getting kids hooked on the "5-a-Day" habit. Combining the healthful spread with crisp favorites like apples and celery makes it easy for youngsters to eat five servings of fruits and vegetables each day.

Even served alone, peanut butter packs a nutritious punch. For example, two tablespoons of peanut butter contain nine grams of protein, about 20 percent of a

child's — and 40 percent of an adult's — daily needs. That's more protein, on an ounce-for-ounce basis, than in meat or cheese. Besides protein, peanut butter offers lots of vitamins and minerals and a fair amount of fiber. And it has no cholesterol. The fats in peanut butter are monounsaturated or polyunsaturated, the kind of fats some researchers say may help reduce cholesterol in the body.

Need more reasons to include peanut butter — peanuts, too — in your family's after-school schedule? The Texas peanut growers have developed some kid-tested recipes that junior cooks can make with adult supervision. The growers are also inviting fledgling chefs to join the Texas Peanut Kids Club and receive more p-nutty recipes.



### PEANUT BUTTER TRIVIA

We eat enough peanut butter each year that, if spread, would cover the floor of the Grand Canyon.

By the time most kids finish high school, they will have each eaten 1,500 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches.

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

Peanut butter was invented in 1890 by a doctor who ground up peanuts to serve as a nutritious and easily digested food for his elderly patients.

### TEXAS COWPOKE TRAIL MIX

Sprinkle this snack mix over breakfast cereal, ice cream or frozen yogurt, layer it with pudding, or enjoy it on its own for an anytime snack.

#### INGREDIENTS:

2 cups cereal (granola, bran squares, oat circles)  
2 cups chopped, mixed dried fruit (apricots, apples, cherries, peaches, prunes, dates or figs)

1 cup thin pretzel sticks, broken in half  
3/4 cup shredded coconut (optional)  
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
2 tablespoons honey

1 1/2 cups dry-roasted peanuts

#### EQUIPMENT:

large mixing bowl  
dry measuring cups  
measuring spoons  
mixing spoons

2 cookie sheets  
2-quart container  
aluminum foil

#### WHAT YOU DO:

1. In a large bowl, stir together cereal, chopped dried fruits, dry-roasted peanuts, pretzel sticks and coconut, if desired.
2. Add cinnamon and honey, tossing well to coat mixture.
3. Spread mixture on foil-lined cookie sheets. Bake in a 350° oven for 10 minutes. Cool; store in a tightly covered container.

Makes about 7 1/2 cups trail mix.

### DOWN-HOME TEXAS PEANUT BUTTER

Here's how to make peanut butter for dipping or dunking, spreading or stuffing, slapping or slathering.

#### INGREDIENTS:

1 cup dry-roasted peanuts  
1 tablespoon peanut oil

1/4 teaspoon salt (omit if salted peanuts are used)

#### EQUIPMENT:

dry measuring cups  
measuring spoons

rubber spatula  
food processor or blender

#### WHAT YOU DO:

**Food Processor Method:** (use metal blade)

1. Place ingredients in container and close.
2. Plug in.
3. Process for 3 to 5 minutes.
4. Stop machine. Scrape sides of container with rubber spatula.
5. Start the machine. Continue processing until mixture is a smooth paste.

**Blender Method:**

1. Place ingredients in blender. Close lid.
2. Push button to blend. Let blend several minutes.
3. Turn blender off.
4. Remove lid. Use a rubber spatula to scrape mixture from blender sides to the bottom.
5. Close lid. Continue blending until mixture is a smooth paste. Store in a tightly closed jar in the refrigerator. Stir peanut butter before serving. Makes 1 cup peanut butter.

### The ABCs of Healthful Snacking

#### A is for Apple

Slices or chunks of tart, crisp apple contrast spectacularly with the smooth creaminess of peanut butter. Here is an example.

- **Peanut Butter and Apple Walk-Away**  
Carefully slice off the top of an apple at the base of the stem and set aside. Remove apple core. Brush the cut sides of apple with lemon juice. Fill cored apple with 2 tablespoons of peanut butter (can be combined with raisins or other dried fruits). Replace apple top and wrap in plastic wrap until ready to eat.

#### B is for Butter - Peanut Butter

There's hardly a snack ingredient more American than peanut butter. Here's one of the sure-fire best ways to eat it.

- **Lone Star Peanut Butter 'n' Jelly**  
Slather 2 tablespoons peanut butter on one side of a slice of bread. Spread 1 tablespoon jam or jelly on a second slice. Slap the two together and cut with a star-shaped cookie cutter. For the ultimate in aroma and flavor, try grilling the sandwich. Spread softened butter or margarine on both of the outward sides of the bread. Grill the first side until brown, then turn and grill on the other side.

#### C is for Celery

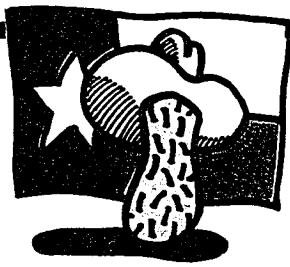
Add the crunchy goodness of celery to the creamy protein of peanut butter, and you've got a delicious, nutritious twosome. Here's how.

- **Texas Bugs on a Log**  
Fill trimmed and chilled celery stalks with cream cheese and top with peanut butter and raisins (Texas bugs). Or skip the cream cheese, fill the stalks with pure peanut butter and top with raisins.

### RECIPE BROCHURE AND TEXAS PEANUT KIDS CLUB OFFER

Join the Texas Peanut Kids Club, and you'll get a colorful, signed certificate, a recipe brochure called "Dang Crunchy, Plumb Good Texas Peanut Recipes for Kids" and two collectible peanut stickers. Just send \$1 to cover postage and handling to:

Texas Peanut Kids Club  
c/o Texas Peanut Producers Board  
P.O. Box 398  
Gorman, TX 76454



## PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR HOMEWORK

Back-to-school time is the perfect time to fine-tune not just eating habits, but homework habits as well. Here are 10 tips from the Texas peanut growers for helping your child chalk up a successful school year. These are things you can do to prepare your child for homework.

1. Start now. If you have a preschooler, set aside some quiet time each day. Read to your child or help him or her enjoy an educational game. This will help your child develop the discipline needed for tackling homework assignments later on.
2. Once your child is in school, agree on the same homework time each day. Even if your child has no assignments on a particular day, he or she can read or enjoy other creative activities during homework time.
3. Set up a quiet, comfortable study area, away from your child's normal play area if possible. Necessary elements are adequate lighting, comfortable seating, ample workspace, good ventilation and a space to store study materials.
4. Reduce distractions. Turn off the radio, TV or CD player and establish rules against using the phone during study time. Also ensure that others in the family honor the quiet time.
5. Give your child the tools needed for homework projects. This can include essentials like pencils, erasers, crayons and paper. You don't have to establish an at-home library, but older children also can benefit from such resources as a dictionary, an atlas and an encyclopedia.
6. Teach your child that the library can be a best friend. Get your child acquainted with the public or school library by demonstrating how it works and how much fun it can be. Also help your child develop other sources for locating resources like books, magazines and newspapers.
7. Be a positive role model. During your child's homework time, do some of your own "homework." For example, read the newspaper, pay the bills or plan family activities.
8. Work with your child in choosing and making good-tasting, healthful snacks as study break or end-of-homework treats. Just as positive homework habits help develop a child's mind, nutritious snacks help develop a child's body.
9. Help your child feel good about school projects by making them enjoyable and relevant to out-of-school activities. For example, show your child how math skills work during a special trip to the grocery store.
10. Don't stop here. Now that you know how to prepare your child for homework, talk with his or her teacher about how to actually help your child with homework. Your positive involvement is essential for your child's success in school and beyond.