



## RECIPE FOR PEASE POTTAGE ~ A NEW ENGLAND FAVORITE

*Courtesy of Plimoth Plantation, Plymouth, MA*

Pease Pottage was one of the most common dishes eaten at sea in the 1600s, using the shipboard staples of dried peas and salted meat. This simple dish, with perhaps a few herbs added, was also frequently eaten by landsmen in the winter and spring. Many generations of New Englanders have grown up this dish by its modern name -- pea soup.

*The use of Pease ...being dry they serve to boil into a kinde of broth or pottage, wherein many doe put Tyme, Mints, Savoury, or some other such hot herbs, to give it the better rellish, and is much used in Towne and Country in the Lent time, especially of the poorer sort of people.*

*It is much used likewise at Sea for those of them that goe long voyages, and is for change, because it is fresh, a welcome diet to most persons therein.*

John Parkinson, Paradisi in Sole, Paradisus Terrestris (London, 1629) Facsimile reprint as A Garden of Pleasant Flowers. New York: Dover, 1976, p. 524

*Take the best old pease you can get, wash and boil them in fair water, when they boil scum them, and put in a piece of interlarded bacon about two pound, put in also a bundle of mince, or other sweet herbs; boil them not too thick, serve the bacon on sippets in thin slices, and pour on the broth.*

Robert May, The Accomplish't Cook (London, 1666), p. 95

### **MODERN RECIPE NOTES**

1 1/2 cup whole peas, rinsed and picked over  
8 cups water (plus additional water for soaking peas)  
4 oz. thick sliced bacon, coarsely chopped

Place peas in a bowl and add water to cover by 3 inches. Leave overnight for cooking in the morning or soak all day to cook for dinner.

Drain peas and discard water. Place peas and bacon in a large pot and add 8 cups fresh water. Bring to a boil over high heat, then turn heat down to gently simmer for 2 hours or until peas are soft and easily mashed. Add water if necessary to keep from burning.

Serve with pilot crackers (the modern equivalent of ship's biscuit) and beer for a true shipboard meal. Generously serves four hungry sailors.