



Parmesan Pea Spread

From Graze by Suzanne Lenzer

Makes about 2 cups

I love this incredibly simple, vibrantly green springtime spread — it works brilliantly as a topping for crostini, but it's also a workhorse for last minute entertaining. I use it as the base for Risi e Bisi, a lovely green risotto, or I serve it in a bowl with taralli or crackers like a dip. And I'm not shy about saying I use frozen peas sometimes; having a bag of them in the freezer can be a lifesaver, I find. —*Suzanne Lenzer*

- 4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 1 tablespoon minced shallot (about 1/2 shallot)
- 2 cups fresh or frozen peas
- 1/2 cup chicken stock
- 1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese, or more to taste

- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- Fresh mint leaves, for garnish

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1. In a large saucepan, melt 2 tablespoons of the butter over medium heat. Add the shallot and cook until just soft, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the peas and swirl them around in the butter until nicely coated, then increase the heat to medium-high and add the chicken stock. Bring the stock up to a simmer and cook the peas until they're tender but still bright green, no more than 2 or 3 minutes for frozen peas, and about 5 minutes for fresh.
 2. Carefully transfer the pea mixture to a food processor and add the remaining 2 tablespoons butter and the Parmesan. Puree the mixture until smooth. Season with salt and pepper and adjust the seasoning as needed (more cheese if you like).
 3. I serve this spread on toasted bread with a mint leaf and another good shave of cheese, but if you like the idea of adding mint into the puree feel free to add a few leaves into the mix; just be cautious as the mint can overpower the delicate sweetness of the peas if you have a heavy hand.