

ENGLISH SHELL PEAS

with Olive Oil and Salt

SERVES 4

If you love *edamame*, the Japanese hors d'oeuvre of steamed soybeans, then you'll go nuts for this new American variation made by grilling peas in the pod, then drizzling them with extra-virgin olive oil and seasoning them with salt. It's the ultimate user-friendly starter: focused on one primary ingredient, super-easy for the cook, fun for the guests (who get to suck out the peas), and loaded with flavor. They're so quick and easy that you can make them to order, grilling up fresh batches as you run out, though in my experience you'll go through as many peas as you have in the house, so you may as well cook 'em all up from the get-go.

2 pounds largest available peas in the pod, at least 4 inches in length

1/3 cup canola oil

Salt

Extra-virgin olive oil, for serving

Freshly ground black pepper

Preheat a gas grill to high, or prepare a charcoal grill for grilling, letting the coals burn until covered with white ash.

Put the pea pods in a large bowl. Drizzle with the canola oil, and season with salt. Grill, turning with tongs every 2 minutes, until the skins blacken and blister and the peas feel soft through the pod, approximately 8 minutes. Use the tongs to transfer the pea pods to a large plate or platter. Drizzle with extra-virgin olive oil, and season generously with salt and pepper.

Serve hot, passing an empty bowl or two alongside for trashing spent pods.

NOTES TO THE COOK If you can't find pea pods large enough that they won't fall through your grill grate, lay a wire cooling rack, top side down (so the legs are facing upward), on top of the grate and grill on that.

When grilling, trust your eyes more than your stopwatch. All the grilling recipes in this book feature cooking times, but these should be taken as a guideline, not as gospel. Unlike using an oven, where you can control the exact temperature at all times, and the temperature is the same on all sides of the food being cooked, using a grill is not an exact science. The grilling time will be influenced by whether you're using charcoal or gas, how hot the fire is, how close your grill grate is to the heat source, and even how strong the wind is blowing across your backyard. Plus, the food is only cooked from below; even if you cover the grill, the heat under the grate will be more intense than the ambient temperature. Bottom line: Keep a watchful eye on whatever you're grilling.