

Health Benefits of Peanut Butter

November is full of so many tasty foods. And while **peanut butter** may not come to mind as a November food, it is [National Peanut Butter Lover's Month](#).



Peanut butter, **as American as...** Well, actually the Aztecs ate a mashed peanut paste. Fast-forward to the late 1880's and a Canadian by the name of Marcellus Gilmore Edson patented peanut paste. (Yes, I agree... definitely not as appealing a name as peanut *butter*.) Then, it was 11 years later when an American, Dr. John Harvey Kellogg (yep, the same man who created the cereal brand), patented a process for creating butter from raw peanuts. And, in the early 1900's, a peanut-butter-making machine was created by a man out of St. Louis. So, peanut butter definitely has roots in the U.S., just maybe not its earliest of roots. But **no doubt, peanut butter is a**

definitely a staple in the American diet, and boy do we like our peanut butter!

In fact, it is estimated that the **average American eats about 3 pounds of peanut butter** per person each year. Compare this to the estimated 1 tablespoon of peanut butter consumed by Europeans each year, and it starts to sound like a lot. However, as a peanut butter lover and a registered dietitian, I say... it's okay that eat our fair share of peanut butter.

Health Benefits of Peanut Butter

You may have heard that the humble PB&J sandwich is a [pregame food of choice](#) for many pro athletes, and that's for good reason. Thanks to its high protein content, peanut butter makes a great **plant-based protein**. Plus, it's **rich in a variety of vitamins, minerals and healthy fats**.

Here are just a few nutrients found in this power-packed protein:

- **Protein** – 2 tablespoons of peanut butter contain 9 grams of protein, which helps build new muscle and helps repair existing muscles after a workout
- **Vitamin E** – helps body fight free radicals and germs
- **Vitamin B-6** – helps lower levels of chronic inflammation
- **Magnesium** – important for well-functioning nerves and muscles and helps support bone and heart health
- **Manganese** – helps to promote healthy bones and reduce the risk of osteoporosis
- **Niacin** – helps maintain healthy blood cholesterol levels
- **Unsaturated fats** – mix of both monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fatty acids, which help support a healthy heart and weight

With that being said, peanut butter contains a high amount of calories (fats contain more calories per gram than carbohydrates and proteins). So, enjoy that peanut butter, just **enjoy it in moderation** if watching calories.

Ways to Enjoy Peanut Butter

There's more to peanut butter than just a sandwich. Or, [Peanut Butter Fingers](#) made famous by Joey on *Friends*.

Try peanut butter to boost flavor and protein in some of these...

- Smoothies
- Oatmeal
- Granola
- Marinade
- Salad dressings
- Ice cream or banana "nice cream"
- Over noodles
- In stir-fries
- In baked goods
- In these delicious [Choco-Oat Cookie Dough Energy Balls](#)



These energy bites make for a delicious and portable snack, perfect for game day, after school or post-workout.

Just Don't Call it a Nut

While often referred to as a nut, peanuts are actually **legumes**, since they grow underground (not on trees, like

nuts). So enjoy that tablespoon or two of peanut butter every day. Just don't call it a nut.

PLEASE SHARE: What are your favorite ways to eat peanut butter? Please share. We'd love to hear from you!