

The Story of the Peanut

“My origin is unknown, but I can be traced back to 950 B.C. in Brazil and Peru. I was carried from South and Central America to Africa in 1502 by Portuguese traders. I was later carried to the New World as part of food supply aboard slave ships.

Until 1907, I was called many different names such as ground nut, ground pea, earth nut, monkey nut, goober, pinda, pinder, manilla nut, etc. I was first raised for market and sold in Nashville, Tennessee in 1845. In 1870, I traveled to New York and was introduced with the Barnumís circus. In 1889, I traveled to China with a missionary and liked it so well there that China is now the world’s number two producer of me.

I was first grown in the United States for fattening farm animals - especially pigs, turkeys, and chickens. Around 1900, equipment for planting, cultivating, harvesting, picking, shelling, cleaning, roasting, blanching, and salting me was invented.

In 1906, I met an Italian immigrant named Amedeo Obici and suggested that we start a company called Planters Peanuts. Mr. Obici liked the idea and I was able to come into my own as a food.

I am planted in warm, well-drained, sandy soil in rows in April and May. I am a low-growing, straggling plant which produces small yellow flowers where the leaves are attached to the stem. As soon as the flower fades, the stem falls and thrusts the embryo into the ground where the pod develops and matures. I am contained within the pod.

I am usually plowed up in October into windrows and allowed to dry in the air for a few days. I am then combined or thrashed from the vines and dried in storage bins equipped with fan heaters. As I dry, my appearance goes from a soft milky look to a hard, firm nut.

If I am grown in the Virginias or Carolinas, I am somewhat larger than if I am grown in the Southeast or Southwest. I usually travel to Fort Smith by train with 64,400,000 (120,000 pounds) of my close friends in each rail car.

In all of my travels, I have never encountered a processing facility more enjoyable to be processed in than Planters in Fort Smith, Arkansas.”

~