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George Washington Carver (1864 - 1943) has become known as the “grandfather of peanuts” because he developed hundreds of products using peanuts.

Where in the world?

Scientists believe that the peanut originated in **South America**, probably in Brazil or Peru. Spanish explorers brought peanuts back to Spain (where they are still grown), and traders brought them to Asia and Africa. The peanut made its way back to North America on slave ships in the 1700s.

While the peanut began as an American plant, nearly 85% of the world’s crop is now grown in Asia and Africa.

In a word

Peanuts have also been known as **ground nuts** or **goobers**.

Although “nut” is in their name, peanuts are **legumes**, not nuts.

Food for the poor

In the 1800s, peanuts were mostly eaten by the poor or fed to livestock.

In the late 1800s, George Washington Carver, an ex-slave, botanist and chemist, proved that raising peanuts improved soil by adding nitrogen. He also developed more than 300 uses for peanuts.

The demand for peanuts increased in the early 20th century, when new equipment made it easier to produce, harvest and shell peanuts.

Peanuts have sometimes been called “the poor man’s protein” because they are so affordable.

Today, food banks across North America rely on peanut butter donations to help feed the hungry. It also helps save the lives of severely malnourished children in countries stricken by poverty, political unrest and natural disasters.

SOURCES: *World Book Encyclopedia*, World Book Inc.; <https://www.britannica.com>; <https://www.peanutsusa.com>; <https://www.nationalpeanutboard.org>; <https://www.about-peanuts.com>; The American Peanut Council; The Peanut Institute

WORLD OF WONDER

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PEANUTS

The peanut was once so little-appreciated that it was eaten only by the very poor or fed to livestock. Today this amazing, protein-rich legume is enjoyed by millions of people every day — and it still helps feed the world’s poor!

The Moche civilization flourished in northern Peru from about A.D. 100 to 700.



Man With Peanuts, Moche ceramic

Did you know?

It takes about 540 peanuts to make a 12-ounce jar of peanut butter.

The average peanut farm is over 200 acres.

Two peanut farmers have been elected president of the U.S. — Thomas Jefferson and Jimmy Carter.

Growing up

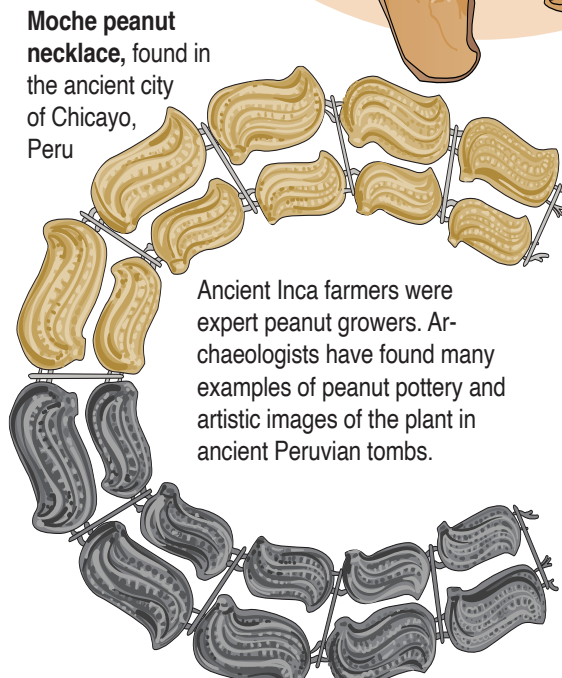
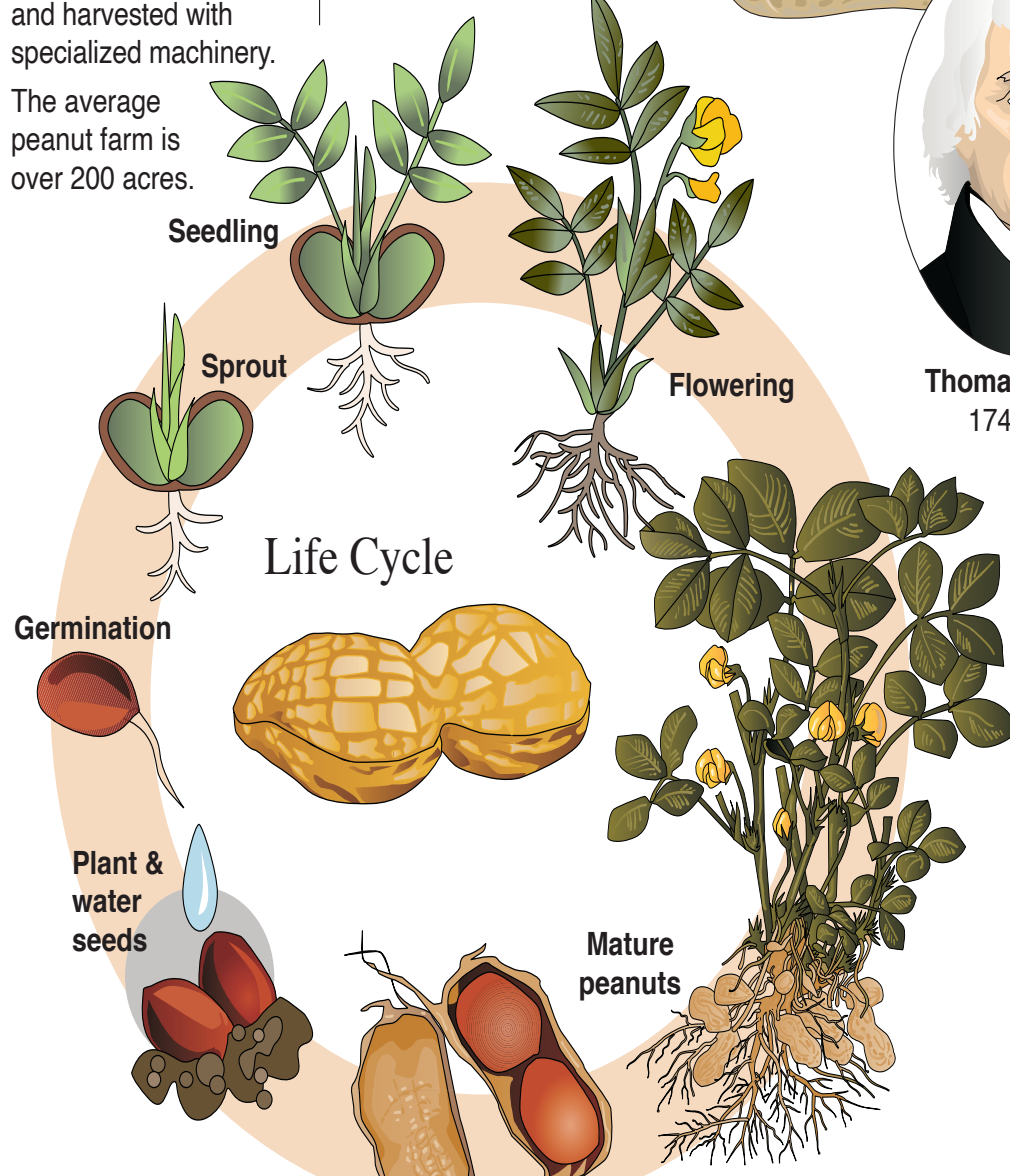
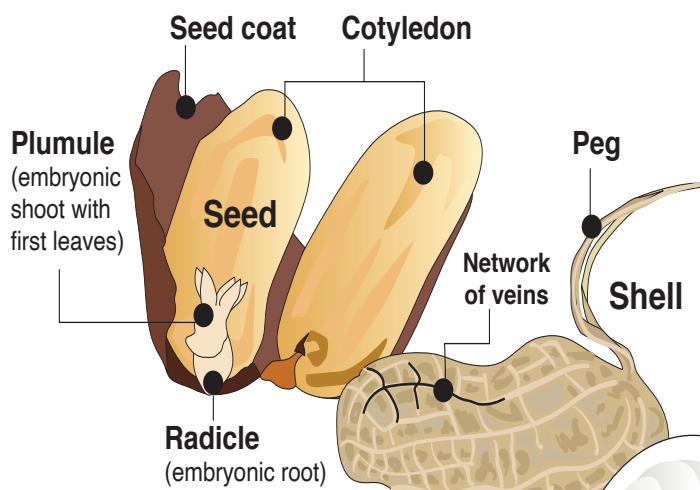
Peanuts grow underground and thrive in tropical and subtropical regions. From planting to harvesting, the growing cycle of a peanut takes 4 to 5 months.

In good soil, one peanut seed will grow into a plant that will yield 50 to 100 peanuts.

Peanuts are planted and harvested with specialized machinery.

The average peanut farm is over 200 acres.

Inside and out: Seed and shell detail

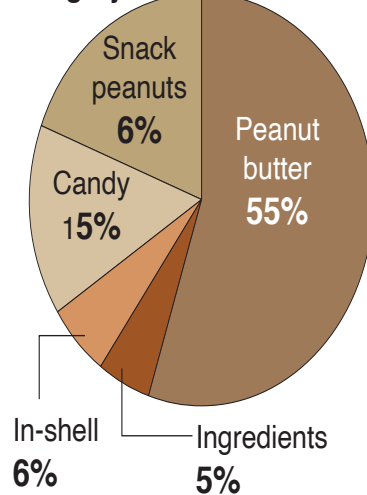


Moche peanut necklace, found in the ancient city of Chicayo, Peru

Ancient Inca farmers were expert peanut growers. Archaeologists have found many examples of peanut pottery and artistic images of the plant in ancient Peruvian tombs.

Eating peanuts

2019 U.S. consumption by category



Peanuts are naturally cholesterol-free.

In the 1880s, **P.T. Barnum** began selling roasted peanuts at his circus performances, where the least-expensive seats became known as “the peanut gallery.”

In the U.S., peanut butter was first introduced at the St. Louis World’s Fair in 1904.

Peanut butter was an important protein staple during World War I and World War II for soldiers and civilians alike.

The peanut was regarded by some African people as one of several plants with a soul.

Peanuts are the 12th most valuable cash crop grown in the United States, with a farm value of more than \$1 billion.

Peanut oil is considered a premium, high-quality cooking oil that is able to withstand higher cooking temperature than many other oils and does not retain the flavor of foods cooked in it.

By law, any product labeled “peanut butter” in the U.S. must be at least 90% peanuts.

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