

March is National Peanut Month

March is National Peanut Month and the Texas Peanut Producers Board (TPPB) is encouraging everyone to celebrate by indulging in one of America's favorite foods.

TPPB and the Western Peanut Growers Association are teaming up to promote the peanut holiday by sending one pound bags of peanuts to Texas legislators. Texas is the second leading peanut producing state in the country. The peanut industry is worth approximately \$1 billion to the Texas economy.

"This is a great month for everyone to implement peanuts into their everyday diets," said TPPB Executive Director, Shelly Nutt. "Peanuts and peanut products are healthy and easy snacks for kids and adults alike, and they are packed with protein."

National Peanut Month first began as National Peanut Week in 1941. It was expanded to a month-long celebration in 1974. On average, Americans eat about 6 pounds of peanuts per person per year, according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Peanuts have a flavor as big as Texas, but they have more than just great taste going for them. They are packed with 29 essential vitamins, minerals, phytonutrients and antioxidants, such as vitamin E, magnesium, phosphorus and manganese. They also have more protein than any tree nut and contain monounsaturated fat, the "good fat", which has been linked to good heart health.

Naturally high in fiber, peanuts are also a good for people with dietary issues like gluten intolerance or diabetes. Peanuts are naturally cholesterol-free and low in saturated fat.

Peanut oil is also a healthy choice for everyday use because of the high monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fat content. With its distinctive but not overpowering taste, peanut oil has a high heat tolerance. It can be heated to a high temperature without smoking, which makes peanut oil a good choice for deep-fat frying and sautéing.

To celebrate National Peanut Month, try out some great tasting new peanut dishes from the Texas Peanut Producers Board at <http://www.texaspeanutboard.com/nutrition.html>.