



Livin' La vida OKra



Can you spot the okra growing on the plants?

What is Okra?

The okra plant is known by the scientific name, *Abelmoschus Esculentus*. The okra that we eat is a seed pod that houses the seeds of the *Abelmoschus Esculentus* plant. This means that you can use the seeds of your okra to grow your very own plant!

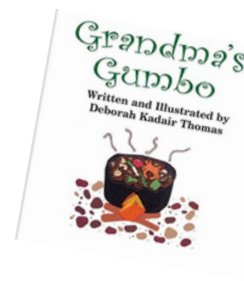
- Check out our "Getting to Know Okra" Activity sheet to learn more about the different parts of the okra plant and pod.
- Because it has seeds, okra is considered to be a fruit, even though it is eaten like a vegetable!

Fun Facts

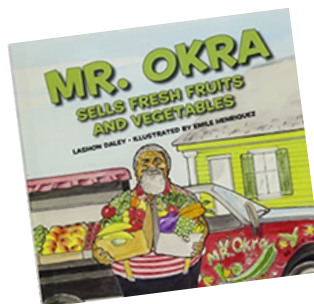
- Okra is often referred to as "gumbo" or "Lady Fingers" in various parts of the world.
- Okra is grown in many tropical regions, such as Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and the southern United States.
- Okra is part of the "Mallow" vegetable family, which also includes Hibiscus and Cotton.
- *Abelmoschus esculentus* (ab-el-MOS-kus ess-kew-LEN-tuss) is the scientific name for okra. *Abelmoschus* derives from Arabic, meaning "source of musk" or "father of musk", and *esculentus* derives from Latin, meaning "full of food" and "delicious".
- There are at least 1,099 known okra varieties in the world, and it is suspected that there is much more to be discovered.
- Throughout history, okra seeds have been used as an alternative to coffee beans!

Children's Books

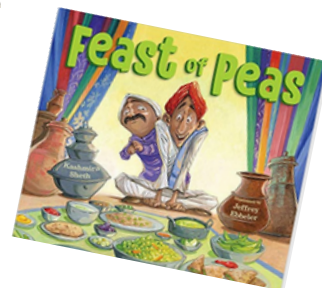
Grandma's Gumbo
By Deborah Kadair Thomas



Mr. Okra Sells Fresh Fruits and Vegetables
By Lashon Daley



Feast of Peas
By Kashmira Sheth



Okra Varieties



Silver Queen Okra

Silver Queen Okra is a rare, heirloom variety, most famous for its white, creamy color. The okra pods can grow up to seven inches long and are known for their smooth texture.



Burgundy Okra

In 1988, Clemson University professor Leon Robbins entered a national competition in which he introduced a special variety of okra to the world -- Burgundy Okra! Since then, other red varieties of okra have become very common, with nicknames such as “Red Velvet” or “Little Lucy.” Burgundy okra tastes and grows just like the green kind, but it is the first of its type since okra was first harvested in the 12th century.



Cow Horn Okra

During the 1900s, this variety of okra was introduced to Mississippi farmers by a woman from an indigenous tribe known as the Creeks. The reason it is called a ‘Cow Horn’ is because of its twisted, unique shape. The stock of a cow horn plant can grow up to 12 feet tall!



Baby Bubba Okra

Although the length of these okra fruits is smaller (it is known as a ‘dwarf okra’), the inside pods of Baby Bubba can be very large, sometimes twice as big as those found in other varieties. It is a good variety for container growing and is recognizable from its long, leafy stocks, and yellow flowers.

Okra Humor

What is the best state to grow vegetables in?

Answer: Okra-homa



What can you say to someone who asks you to eat your vegetables?

Answer: Okra dokie artichokie

Sources: gardenerspath.com/plants/vegetables/okra-varieties/ | gardeningknowhow.com/edible/vegetables/okra/red-burgundy-okra.htm | specialtyproduce.com/produce/Cowhorn_Okra_14018.php | gardenerspath.com/plants/vegetables/okra-varieties/