

Chick-peace

Daniel Rothman (2013)

The chiche pois in French, grão-de-bico (Portuguese), garbanzo (Spanish), humus (Arabic) and Kichererbsen (German) is perhaps the simplest and most basic symbol of human need and movement. Virtually every culture uses this bean for a cheap, indigenous and often exotic dish; yet despite the metaphoric expression “breaking bread,” known to each culture for sitting down to make peace with one’s enemies over a good meal, food or starvation are often at the crossroads of violence.

Listen closely, and the dried chiche-pois could be heard soaking everywhere in the world: in a small water filled bowl it makes a comforting lullaby, whose preparer may dream of the dish that will satisfy their family and friends the next day; amplified, the crackle of the bean coming to life is a reminder that the chiche-pois is often soaked in blood.

The name "chickpea" traces back through the French chiche to cicer in Latin; the original word in English taken directly from French was “chich-pease,” found in print as early as 1388. “Pois,” “paix,” and “pièce” share multiple meanings that dance between where one makes war and peace.

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Recipe (English translation)

Chick-peace is a multi-channel sound installation to be created in a variety of ways, in multiple locations:

Its most basic version requires a stainless steel mixing bowl,

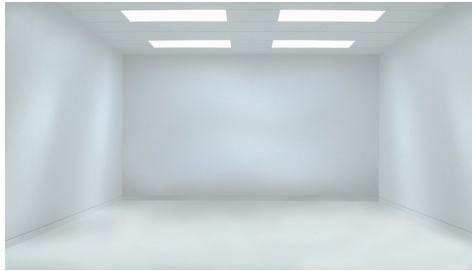


filled with dried chickpeas



and H₂O, just enough to cover the peas.

Place bowl strategically in a room



and wait. Do not disturb.

The poor man's version of only a single bowl may be supplemented by additional bowls.

More complex versions incorporate electronic amplification. Microphones should be placed closely above each bowl, facing downward. A shotgun microphone best isolates ambient noise that would otherwise also be amplified. The loudspeaker should be installed in a separate room to maximize the difference between the sound and its source — both should be accessible to visitors. Amplified volume should be as loud as possible with as little noise as possible.

A great benefit of the work is the discarding of materials: after the beans are fully soaked they may be repurposed as food. Thus it is an opportunity for the second act: food preparation, before the third act of inviting everyone to break pita together.

Ideally, bowls and loudspeakers should be deployed strategically throughout a city, with participating food banks and charitable organizations to organize communal eat-ins, sampling the great variety of ways different cultures prepare this simple bean. All people are happy when they eat well, but they must sometimes be shocked into sharing.

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