Mushy Peas and Bacon

Mushy peas and bacon is a tasty combination. This pea and pork matching takes many guises, the most familiar being pea and ham soup, although the peas are dried, split peas rather than fresh in that hearty soup. Cooking a bag of frozen peas and blitzing it with a tablespoon of butter is quick and easy to do if the crisper section of your fridge is bare. The blitzed peas and some fried bacon readily team up to create flavoursome meals. Nigella Lawson famously prepared grilled salmon with mushy peas and crispy fried prosciutto and it is still a winter favorite of mine and probably the main reason I always have a bag of peas in the freezer. While mushy peas and bacon does sound rather British a similar combination is dished up in Germany and Austria in the form of grilled knackwurst (fatter version of a Frankfurter) and mushy peas. Kids love this simple dish and it's perhaps a little more wholesome than a sausage with chips and tomato sauce. The peas can be bulked out a little with boiled potato if you wish and a little water added to adjust the consistency to suit your needs. Season the blended peas well with salt and a few turns of the pepper mill and it's ready to go for young and old. Another Nigella use of frozen peas is her curiously named green slime soup with added mozzarella. While these combinations appeal to kids and the kid in us a more sophisticated use of mushy peas and crispy bacon is with a simple vegetable based risotto. I enjoyed this striking combination in a lovely little restaurant called Aubergine in Split, Croatia. More sophistication takes the form of ravioli filled with a blend of peas and pecorino and then tossed with prosciutto. While the ravioli is excellent the mushy peas and bacon combo is probably more at home with the simple fare these two kitchen staples can conjure up.

Recipe: Take bag of peas, boil, drain and then blend with a tablespoon of butter in a food processor. Season. Fry some bacon, prosciutto or pancetta until crispy. Combine as you see fit.