



Patient & Family Guide  
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# User-Friendly Pulses: Preparing Dried Beans, Peas & Lentils



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## Pulses

Pulses are beans, dried peas, lentils, and chickpeas.

- They are a good source of minerals such as calcium, magnesium, zinc, and iron.
- They are a good source of B vitamins.
- They are high in fibre and protein.
- They do not contain the fat and cholesterol of some other high protein foods.

Canada's Food Guide recommends including more plant based protein foods in our diets.

Eating a variety of pulses may have positive effects on heart health, diabetes, and maintaining a healthy body weight.

This pamphlet is just a guide. If you have questions, please talk to your health care provider. We are here to help you.

## Buying pulses

Pulses are very easy on your budget. You can find dried pulses in the bulk section or in the canned vegetable aisle of the grocery store.

Look for:

- › kidney, lima, navy or black beans
- › whole peas, split green or yellow peas
- › red or green lentils
- › chickpeas (garbanzo beans)

Pulses are also available as “ready-to-eat” canned foods. They can be found in the canned vegetable aisle, or in the specialty or international foods section of the grocery store. No added salt varieties are also available. Look for:

- › chickpeas
- › red or white kidney beans
- › pinto beans
- › baked beans
- › lentils
- › black beans

## **Preparing pulses**

### **Dried pulses:**

Rinse and sort dried pulses, removing any broken ones or foreign objects. Most dried pulses, except lentils, need to be soaked in water overnight before cooking. You can also use a quick soaking method.

### **Quick soaking method 1:**

Put rinsed pulses in a large saucepan. Cover with 2 inches of water and bring to a boil. Boil for 2 minutes, then remove from heat. Cover and let stand for 1 hour. Drain and rinse.

### **Quick soaking method 2:**

Put rinsed pulses in a large saucepan. Cover with 2 inches of water and bring to a boil. Boil for 10 minutes and then drain. Cover pulses with cold water and let them soak for 30 minutes, then drain.

Source: Ann Lindsay's *Lighthearted Everyday Cookbook*. Used with permission from the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Nova Scotia.

### **Ready-to-eat canned pulses:**

Pour canned pulses into a strainer to drain. Rinse pulses under running water for at least 10 seconds and let drain for 2 minutes. This will remove almost half of the sodium from pulses that are canned with salt.

## Ways to start eating pulses

Use:

- › chickpeas in a salad or stir fry
- › lentils in vegetable stew
- › peas or beans in soup or pasta dishes

Replace:

- › meat with lentils in spaghetti sauce
- › meat with beans or lentils in burgers

Try:

- › dips with chickpeas (hummus) – see page 6
- › vegetarian chili
- › bean burritos

## Reducing gas from pulses

The more you eat pulses, the less you will be bothered by gas. Let your body get used to them slowly and make sure you drink plenty of fluids.

When preparing dried pulses, change the soaking water a few times. When cooking, drain the water after 30 minutes, add fresh water and continue to cook until the beans are tender.

Well-cooked beans will be less gassy.

Another option is to add 1 tsp. of baking soda to the cooking water. Rinse pulses after cooking.

Drain canned pulses and rinse well before using. Some people use Beano<sup>®</sup>, a product to reduce gas. Follow the instructions with the product.

## Quick meals with a can of beans

1. Make **easy chili** by sautéing a diced onion and green pepper in oil. Add a can each of: crushed tomatoes, corn, mushrooms, kidney beans and black beans (drain and rinse beans). Add spices to taste: 2 tbsp. chili powder, 1 tsp. dried oregano, 1 tsp. cumin. Simmer for 15 min.
2. Try a **tasty Greek salad** with diced red onion, green pepper, tomato, cucumber, feta cheese and a can of drained and rinsed chickpeas. Toss with bottled dressing or make your own of olive oil, lemon juice, minced garlic, dried oregano and fresh ground pepper.
3. Try **Mexican-style beans**: Combine baked beans, kernel corn, chopped red or green pepper, chopped tomato and chili powder to taste. Heat and serve. For a change, spread on a tortilla, heat and serve with salsa and yogurt.
4. Kick up a can of **chicken noodle soup** by sautéing diced onion, garlic, celery and carrots in a little oil in a medium saucepan. Add the chicken noodle soup, a can of white kidney beans (drained and rinsed), 2 cans of water and dried herbs of your choice such as rosemary, thyme and fresh ground pepper. Simmer for 10 minutes and serve. For a colourful twist, add chopped baby spinach or kale right before serving.

## **Hummus Dip**

- › 19 oz (540 ml) can chickpeas, drained
- › 2 cloves garlic, minced
- › ½ cup (125 ml) plain yogurt
- › 3 Tbsp (45 ml) lemon juice, freshly squeezed
- › ¼ tsp (1 ml) salt
- › ½ tsp (2 ml) ground cumin (or more to taste)
- › 2 Tbsp (30 ml) tahini (or peanut butter)
- › Freshly ground pepper (to taste)

In food processor or blender, puree chickpeas with garlic until coarsely chopped.

Add yogurt, lemon juice and seasonings. Blend to smooth paste.

Remove and refrigerate, covered, for at least 2 hours so flavours develop.

Hummus is a traditional Middle Eastern dish. Use it as a dip for vegetables, crackers or pita bread. Spread it on pizza crust instead of tomato sauce. Use it on sandwiches or wraps instead of mayonnaise.

## **Black Bean Quesadillas**

- › 19 oz (540 ml) can black beans, drained and rinsed
- › 2 Tbsp (30 ml) salsa
- › ½ tsp (2 ml) cumin and chili powder (optional)
- › diced red or green pepper
- › 8 small whole wheat flour tortillas
- › 1 cup (250 ml) shredded cheese

Preheat oven to 400°F (205°C). Mix spices into salsa. Mash black beans and salsa (or blend in a food processor).

Divide onto 4 tortillas and spread evenly. Top each with some diced pepper and ¼ of the shredded cheese. Cover with remaining tortillas and bake for 5-7 minutes.

Let cool for 5 minutes before cutting into triangles. Serve with salsa, sour cream and half a plate of raw veggies.



## Bean Salad

Drain and rinse each of the following and combine in a large bowl with onion.

- › 19 oz (540 ml) can green beans
- › 19 oz (540 ml) can yellow beans
- › 19 oz (540 ml) can lima beans
- › 19 oz (540 ml) can red kidney beans
- › 19 oz (540 ml) can chick peas
- › 1 large onion, sliced thinly

Dressing:

Mix in a covered container and pour over the beans.

- › ¼ cup (50 ml) canola oil
- › ½ cup (125 ml) sugar
- › 1 cup (250 ml) vinegar (white or cider)

Flavour the dressing with the following spices: salt, pepper, thyme, oregano, garlic powder, dry mustard.

Stir beans several times before serving. Chill at least 1 hour. Bean salad is even better the next day.

Options:

Try mixing bean salad with a tossed garden salad instead of using salad dressing.

## Speedy Bean & Lentil Casserole

- › 1 Tbsp (15 ml) vegetable oil
- › 1 large onion, chopped
- › 2 stalks celery, sliced
- › 19 oz (540 ml) can kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- › 19 oz (540 ml) can lentils, drained and rinsed or 1 cup (250 ml) dry lentils, cooked
- › 19 oz (540 ml) can tomatoes, drained and chopped
- › ½ tsp (2 ml) dried rosemary or thyme
- › pepper (to taste)
- › 1 cup (250 ml) shredded low-fat cheddar or mozzarella cheese
- › 1 Tbsp (15 ml) grated Parmesan cheese

In flame-proof casserole, heat oil over medium heat. Cook onion and celery until onion is softened. Add beans, lentils, tomatoes, rosemary and pepper to taste. Bring to simmer. Sprinkle with cheese and broil until cheese melts. Makes 4 servings.

Microwave method: In microwaveable casserole, combine oil, onion and celery. Cover and cook at high power for 3 to 4 minutes or until onion is softened. Add beans, lentils, tomatoes, rosemary and pepper to taste. Cover and microwave at high power for 5 minutes or until heated through. Sprinkle with cheese and microwave until cheese melts and is bubbly.

## Old-fashioned Baked Beans

- › 1 lb (454 g) white pea beans
- › 2 medium onions
- › ¼ cup (60 ml) molasses
- › 2 Tbsp (30 ml) tomato paste OR ½ cup (125 ml) ketchup
- › 1 Tbsp (15 ml) brown sugar
- › 1 Tbsp (15 ml) vinegar
- › ¼ tsp (1 ml) salt
- › ½ tsp (2 ml) dry mustard
- › ¼ tsp (1 ml) black pepper
- › 4 cups (1000 ml) hot water
- › 2 slices bacon, chopped

Rinse beans; throw out any discoloured ones. In large saucepan, soak beans overnight or quick soak (see page 3); drain. Add water to cover beans by at least 2 inches, bring to a boil and simmer for 30 minutes; drain.

Preheat oven to 250°F (120°C), or use a slow cooker. In a bean pot or 8-cup casserole, spread onion slices. Mix together molasses, tomato paste, sugar, vinegar, salt, mustard and pepper; pour into casserole. Add drained beans and hot water; sprinkle with bacon.

Cover and bake for 6 hours (oven or slow cooker). Uncover and bake for 1 hour longer, adding water if needed to keep beans covered. Makes about 8 servings, about ¾ cup each.

## Red Lentil Spaghetti Sauce

Red lentils cook so quickly that this sauce can be prepared in about the same amount of time as traditional meat sauce.

- › 1 large onion, chopped
- › 2 large celery stalks, chopped
- › 2 cloves garlic, chopped or ½ tsp (2 ml) garlic powder
- › 1 Tbsp (15 ml) vegetable oil
- › 1 cup (250 ml) dried red lentils, rinsed
- › 2 cups (500 ml) beef broth or water
- › 28 oz (798 ml) can tomatoes, crushed or diced + ½ of a 5 ½ oz (156 ml) can tomato paste
- › 1 Tbsp (15 ml) chopped fresh parsley or 1 tsp (5 ml) dried parsley
- › ½ tsp (2 ml) dried oregano
- › Pinch cayenne pepper
- › Garnish with grated Parmesan cheese

In large saucepan on medium-high heat, cook onion, celery and garlic in hot oil for about 5 minutes or until tender. Add lentils and beef broth; cover and cook on low for about 35 minutes, or until lentils are tender. Add crushed tomatoes and seasonings; cook covered for about 15 minutes, or until lentils are soft and mushy. Serve over cooked spaghetti; sprinkle with cheese.

## Chickpea & Sweet Potato Curry

- › 1 Tbsp (15 ml) vegetable oil
- › 1 onion, finely chopped
- › 2 garlic cloves, minced
- › 2 Tbsp (30 ml) curry powder
- › 1 tsp (5 ml) ground ginger
- › 2 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and chopped into ½-inch pieces
- › 1 can (796 ml) of tomatoes, diced
- › 1 can (540 ml) of chickpeas, drained and rinsed

In large saucepan on medium-high heat, cook onion and garlic in oil for about 2 minutes. Add curry powder and ginger. Cook another 2 minutes, stirring constantly.

Add sweet potatoes and tomatoes. Bring to a boil, then cover and simmer on medium-low heat for 15 minutes. Stir in the chickpeas and continue cooking until the sweet potatoes are tender, about 10 minutes.

Enjoy over rice, quinoa or other grain.

Makes 6 servings.

## Lentil Brownies

- › ½ cup (125 ml) non-hydrogenated margarine
- › ½ cup (125 ml) lentil purée\*
- › ¾ cup (188 ml) cocoa
- › 1 ½ cups (375 ml) sugar
- › ¾ tsp (3 ml) salt
- › 3 eggs
- › 1 tsp (5 ml) vanilla
- › 1 cup (250 ml) flour
- › 1 cup (250 ml) chocolate chips
- › 1 cup (250 ml) walnuts (optional)

Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C). Melt margarine; mix in lentil purée, cocoa, sugar and salt.

Add eggs, one at a time. Mix in vanilla, flour, chocolate chips (and walnuts).

Bake in a greased 9"x13" pan for 22 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the centre comes out clean.

\*Purée:

Place cooked or rinsed and drained canned lentils into a food processor. For every 1 cup lentils, add ¼ cup water. Blend to make a smooth purée with a consistency like canned pumpkin. If needed, add more water 1 Tbsp at a time.

## For more information and recipes check out these websites:

- › [www.dietitians.ca](http://www.dietitians.ca)
- › [www.unlockfood.ca](http://www.unlockfood.ca)
- › [www.heartandstroke.com](http://www.heartandstroke.com)
- › [www.lentils.org](http://www.lentils.org)
- › [www.pulsecanada.com](http://www.pulsecanada.com)
- › <http://saskpulse.com>

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For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

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Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

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If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.