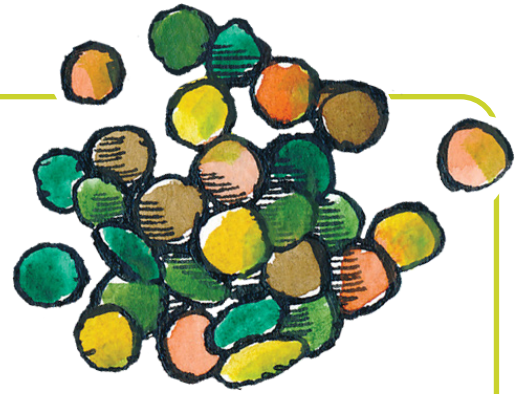


Cafeteria Bites

Lentils



Did You Know

- Lentils are a pulse crop, part of the legume family, along with dry beans, chickpeas (garbanzo beans), and dry peas. The name “pulse” refers to pils, a thick soup.
- Montana is the top producer of lentils in the United States, producing almost 40% of the lentils grown in this country!
- Like other legumes, lentils add nitrogen to the soil, improving soil health. This makes them a good rotational crop with wheat and other grains.
- Even though many people may not be familiar with them, lentils were one of the first crops cultivated by humans.

Selection

French green, black, red, green, golden, and Pardina (brown) are some of the many varieties of lentils. While any variety is very versatile, each one has unique characteristics including texture, flavor, and color, making them more or less suited for certain culinary uses. Green lentils are larger and very versatile, being suitable for soups, salads, and in baked goods as a puree. Golden and red lentils cook quickly and lose their shape, making them great for adding to sauces, thicker soups, mashed potatoes, or baked goods as a puree. Pardina, Black Beluga®, and French green lentils are smaller and round, hold their shape, and are great sprouted and/or served in soups or salads.



GREEN



DE PUY



RED



BELUGA

Preparation

Prior to use, wash carefully, and pick out debris or rocks.

Cooking

Blend. Add 1-2 tablespoons cooked lentils to smoothies.

Cook. To cook, use 1 cup lentils to 3 cups water. Boil for 15-20 minutes for salads or up to 60 minutes for puree, depending on variety and desired texture. Although lentils do not need to be soaked prior to cooking like other legumes, soaking and sprouting helps to increase nutrient availability.

Grind. Using a high-powered blender, food processor, coffee/spice grinder, or flour mill, grind washed and dried lentils until desired consistency. Use in baked goods as a gluten-free, high-protein, and high-fiber flour.

Pan-fry. Cooked lentils can be used to make veggie burgers, falafel, or croquette.

Puree. Place cooked lentils in food processor and drizzle with olive oil, add seasonings if desired. Blend until smooth. Use puree as a dip for vegetables, spread on sandwiches, base for croquette or patty, or as base for baked goods.

Risotto, Soups, Stews, or Stir-fry. Add cooked lentils to soups, stews, or rice dishes for added nutrients and texture.

Salad. Chill lentils after cooking. Combine with chopped vegetables, such as tomatoes and broccoli, then toss with a balsamic or Italian dressing. Add to a pasta or green salad for fiber.

Season. For added flavor, cook lentils in broth or tomatoes instead of water. To enhance flavor, experiment with allspice, bay, chili powder, cloves, cumin, curry powder, garlic, ginger, nutmeg, oregano, rosemary, or thyme.

Soak. Cover lentils with 2 inches water, cover, and soak in refrigerator for 10-12 hours.

Adapted from the Lentils Food Fact Sheet developed by Montana State University Extension. For the full fact sheet and other resources, visit: <https://nutrition.msuextension.org/>.

Storage

Store lentils in airtight containers in a cool, dry place for up to a year. Cooked lentils may be refrigerated up to 5 days or frozen up to 3 months.

Lentil Squash Hummus

HACCP Process: _____ 1 – No Cook 2 – Cook & Same Day Serve _____ 3 – Cook, Cool, Reheat, Serve _____ 4 – SOP Controlled

Ingredients	42 Servings	Directions:
Garbanzo beans, <i>drained and rinsed</i>	2 cups (<i>reserve juice to adjust consistency later</i>)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To cook lentils: Fill a hotel pan with 2 parts water, 1 part lentils, cover with lid, and bake at 375°F for 15-20 minutes until soft. Cool to below 40°F on sheet pan. Blend all ingredients in food processor until creamy. Refrigerate immediately and hold below 41°F. Store up to seven days or freeze up to one month.
Winter squash, <i>pureed</i>	2 1/2 cups	
Red lentils, <i>cooked</i>	1 quart (<i>about 1/2 quart uncooked</i>)	
Tahini <i>(see note about substitutions)</i>	1/2 cup	
Olive/vegetable oil	1 cup	
Liquid (<i>reserved garbanzo juice or cooled lentil cooking water</i>)	<i>as needed for consistency</i>	
Salt	1 1/2 tsp (<i>or more to taste</i>)	
Paprika	1/2 tsp	
Cumin	1/2 tsp	
Garlic cloves, <i>roasted</i>	6	
Lemon juice	1 Tbsp	

Serving Size	<u>1/2 cup</u>	Pan Size	<u>hotel pan</u>	Yield	<u>42</u>
Oven Temperature & Baking Time:	Conventional	Temperature	<u>375°F</u>	Minutes	<u>15-20</u>
		Convection	Temperature	<u>350°F</u>	Minutes

Meal Component Fulfillment (*Based on Serving Size*) 1 Serving Provides: • 1/4 cup legume vegetable or credit as a meat alternate

Nutrition Analysis : Serving Size: <u>1/2 cup</u>					
<u>208</u>	Calories (kcal)	<u>2.06</u>	Saturated Fat (g)	<u>2.04</u>	Iron (mg)
<u>5.80</u>	Protein (g)	<u>59.88%</u>	Calories from Total Fat (%)	<u>32.38</u>	Calcium (mg)
<u>16.94</u>	Carbohydrate (g)	<u>278.39</u>	Vitamin A (IU)	<u>198.99</u>	Sodium (mg)
<u>13.86</u>	Total Fat (g)	<u>4.14</u>	Vitamin C (mg)	<u>5.05</u>	Dietary Fiber (g)

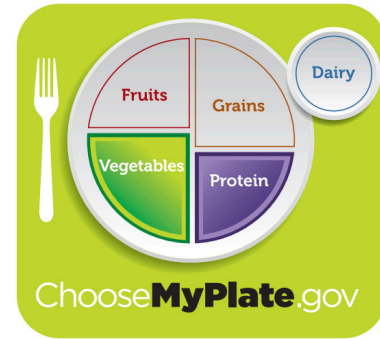
Notes:

- Lentils credit as meat alternate or legume vegetable.
- Tahini is important to the flavor and consistency of the hummus, and should be available through your regular distributor. However, you can omit tahini, adding slightly more oil and lentils to achieve desired consistency.

Source: Jenny and Luca Montague and Jessica Manly, Kalispell Public Schools

Nutrition Information

Lentils are highly nutritious and deserve "superfood" status. They are an excellent source of fiber and a good source of potassium, protein, iron, and vitamin B6. Gram for gram, lentils provide more potassium than bananas, more iron than ground beef, and have more antioxidants than blueberries! The combination of fiber, antioxidants, protein, and other nutrients means a diet rich in lentils may help prevent obesity, certain cancers, and be helpful in management of type 2 diabetes. These gems are perfect for school nutrition programs, as they credit as either a vegetable-legume or a meat alternate and are an affordable protein.



Dig Deeper

For sources and photo credits along with more recipes, lessons, quick activities, resources, and guides, visit: mtharvestofthemonth.org.



4 Montana Harvest of the Month: Lentils



The Montana Harvest of the Month program showcases Montana grown foods in Montana schools and communities. This program is a collaboration between Montana Farm to School, Office of Public Instruction, Montana Team Nutrition Program, National Center for Appropriate Technology, Montana State University Extension, Gallatin Valley Farm to School, Montana Department of Agriculture, Montana Organic Association, and FoodCorps Montana. More information and resources are available at: mtharvestofthemonth.org

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