



Lentils

Did You Know?

Lentils don't need to be soaked before cooking like dry beans. Just rinse, pick out any debris, and add to your favorite recipes.

Lentils are a great addition to

- Breads
- Chili
- Curries
- Dips and spreads
- Indian dishes
- Meatloaf
- Rice dishes
- Salads
- Soups
- Stews
- Stir fries
- Veggie burgers

Important Note:

Salt and acidic foods can increase the cooking time for lentils, so add these near the end of cooking.



Lentils are part of the “legume” family, along with beans, split peas, and soybeans. They make a great protein substitute due to their high protein content, plus they come with a lot of additional health benefits. One half cup of cooked lentils contains about 115 calories, 9 grams of protein, and 8 grams of fiber. Lentils are also low in fat, and a good source of folate, iron, and potassium.

The most common types of lentils are:

- Brown – these are least expensive and easiest to find. In fact, nearly all grocery stores carry them in bags (with the dry beans) or in bulk. They cook quickly, but can also get mushy if overcooked. Brown lentils work especially well in soups and sauces.
- French Green – these are now grown in North America, but a little harder to find than the traditional brown. They take longer to cook, but hold their shape better. Green lentils also have a rich, nutty flavor, making them an ideal addition to salads.
- Red Lentils – these are also less common, but can be found in most health food stores. Usually pink in color, the most common variety is called “Red Chief.” These also cook quickly and become very soft, making them great for curries and soups.

In specialty stores or Indian markets you may find other types of lentils such as yellow, black, white, or split lentils called “daal.” Most can be used interchangeably, so feel free to experiment! Cooking times and textures may vary though, so it is always a good idea to do a little research before using.