



# LENTILS

## SIMPLE IDEAS FOR SIMPLE NUTRITION™

### LENTILS HIDDEN HEALTHY™ NUTRITION

- Just 100 grams of dry green lentils pack in a whole day's worth of the fibre you need.
- Just 100 grams of dry split red lentils has more potassium than a large banana.
- Out of all plant-based foods, lentils contain the most folate.
- A serving of lentils contains more protein than a serving of yogurt.
- Just 100 grams of dry lentils provides 50% of your daily iron needs.
- Lentils have a low glycemic index (GI) value.
- Lentils are naturally gluten-free.
- Carbohydrate counting: ½ cup of cooked lentils = 1 serving.

### LENTILS AND CHOLESTEROL-LOWERING

Leading health authorities around the world recommend a heart-healthy diet with foods that are high in fibre and soluble fibre to help lower cholesterol. Lentils are an excellent source of fibre.

#### How Do Lentils Compare to Other High-Fibre Foods?

|                              | FIBRE<br>(grams) | PER CENT DAILY VALUE<br>(% DV) |
|------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| Lentils, cooked (1 cup)      | 15.6             | 62%                            |
| Chickpeas, cooked (1 cup)    | 12.5             | 50%                            |
| Kidney beans, cooked (1 cup) | 11.3             | 45%                            |
| Prunes (1 cup)               | 9.4              | 38%                            |
| Bran flakes (1 cup)          | 7.1              | 28%                            |
| Whole wheat bread (2 slices) | 3.8              | 15%                            |
| Instant oatmeal (1 package)  | 2.6              | 10%                            |

Researchers from the Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine<sup>1</sup> reviewed 10 randomized clinical trials and found that people eating a high-legume diet reduced their total cholesterol by 11.8 mg/dl and their LDL cholesterol (the bad cholesterol) by 8.0 mg/dl.

### LENTILS AND DIABETES MANAGEMENT

Lentils are a good source of fibre, vegetable protein, and slowly digestible carbohydrates – all of which are important elements in lowering the glycemic index (GI) of a diet.

#### The GI Chart

|                      | GLYCEMIC INDEX (GI) VALUE |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Lentils, red split   | 21                        |
| Lentils, green       | 22                        |
| Kidney beans         | 23                        |
| Chickpeas            | 33                        |
| Oatmeal, rolled oats | 58                        |
| Bread, refined       | 76                        |
| Rice, white          | 89                        |
| Potato, skinless     | 98                        |

Source: International GI Database [Internet]. Sydney, Australia: The University of Sydney, Human Nutrition Unit, School of Molecular Biosciences. c2011 [updated 2011 December 1; cited 2012 March 26]. Available from: <http://www.glycemicindex.com/index.php>

Lentils' low GI value makes them an ideal staple in a diabetic kitchen. In fact, numerous published studies have shown the benefits of a low-GI diet in diabetes management. In 2008, the Canadian Diabetes Association Guidelines<sup>2</sup> recommend replacing high-GI carbohydrates with low-GI carbohydrates for better blood sugar control. In particular, a significant reduction in glycated hemoglobin (HbA1C), a blood marker indicating the average amount of sugar present in the blood in the last three months, was associated with a low-GI diet. Lentils, with a low GI value, are the perfect food to be eaten regularly in a diabetic diet.

### LENTILS AND WEIGHT LOSS

Losing weight does not mean you have to go hungry! When coupled with a high-GI meal, lentils were able to make study participants<sup>3</sup> feel full earlier, resulting in a decrease in overall food intake. What is amazing is that lower blood sugar was also observed four hours after eating the lentil meal.

Information prepared by Gloria Tsang, Registered Dietitian for Canadian Lentils.



# COOKING WITH LENTILS MADE EASY

## COOKING LENTILS IS SUPER-EASY! UNLIKE BEANS, LENTILS DO NOT NEED ANY PRE-SOAKING.

### THE 1-2-3 LENTIL COOKING STEPS:

Step 1: Rinse lentils under running water. No soaking!

Step 2: Boil (5 to 25 minutes, depending on type of lentil and recipe).

Step 3: Season (optional).

For every cup of whole lentils, add 3 cups of unsalted water. This will yield 3 cups of cooked lentils. It's important to use unsalted water, as salt hardens and toughens lentils.

Split lentils generally require less water and take less time to cook. For every cup of split lentils, add 2 cups of unsalted water. This will yield 2 cups of cooked lentils.

### EASY WAYS TO ADD LENTILS TO YOUR EVERYDAY COOKING

1. Add a hearty element by adding wholesome lentils to any brothy soup.
2. Prepare a delicate veggie dip by pureeing lentils and seasoning with citrus and nut butter.
3. Add nutrition punch by mixing lentils into your salad.
4. Enhance texture by adding lentils to your stir-fry.
5. Add lentils to fillings for tacos or quesadillas.
6. Add colour to your pot of curry or stew by adding red lentils.

#### Canadian Lentils

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Recommended by your dietitian:

<sup>1</sup>Bazzano LA, Thompson AM, Tees MT, et al. Non-soy legume consumption lowers cholesterol levels: A meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. *Nutr Metab Cardiovasc Dis.* 2011 Feb;21(2):94-103. Epub 2009 Nov 25.

<sup>2</sup>Canadian Diabetes Association Clinical Practice Guidelines Expert Committee. Canadian Diabetes Association 2008 clinical practice guidelines for the prevention and management of diabetes in Canada. *Can J Diabetes.* 2008;32(suppl 1):S1-S201.

<sup>3</sup>Mollard RC, Zykus A, Luhovy BL, et al. The acute effects of a pulse-containing meal on glycaemic responses and measures of satiety and satiation within and at a later meal. *Br J Nutr.* 2011 Nov 7:1-9. Epub ahead of print.

For more details on lentil nutrition and recipe ideas,  
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