

## Legumes: A Healthy Protein Choice

Legumes come from plants with pods. They are a staple of many diets around the world including Asian, Indian, South and Central American, and Middle Eastern. The United States is one of the few countries that do not commonly use legumes as a source of protein. Legumes are low in cost and very healthy. Use this handout for ideas to add legumes as a healthy protein source in your everyday meals.

### Types of Legumes

Black beans	Garbanzo beans (chickpeas)	Navy beans
Black-eyed peas	Kidney beans	Peanuts
Boston beans	Lima beans	Pinto beans
Cannellini beans	Lentils	Soybeans (edamame)
Fava beans	Mung Beans	Split peas



### Health Benefits of Legumes

- Excellent source of protein
  - A ½ cup of legumes has the same amount of protein as 1 oz of meat.
  - Eat legumes with a variety of plant foods (such as rice, nuts, seeds, or vegetables) to make a balanced diet.
- Low in fat and cholesterol-free
  - The fat in legumes is mostly unsaturated, which is better for heart health.
- High in fiber, both soluble and insoluble
  - Soluble fiber may help to lower cholesterol and control blood sugar.
  - Insoluble fiber may help to prevent constipation.
  - Fiber can make you to feel full longer.
- Low glycemic index
  - Legumes will not cause blood sugar to rise as quickly as some other carbohydrates.
- High in many vitamins and minerals: potassium, folate, magnesium, iron, zinc.



### Tips for Adding Legumes into Your Diet



- Use seasoned lentils or black beans instead of ground beef in taco salads.
- Replace a hamburger patty with a black bean patty.
- Try falafel (chick pea fritter) in a pita.
- Use beans or lentils instead of meat in soups and chili.
- Edamame (soybeans in pods) or soy nuts make a great snack.
- Replace white flour with legume flour (such as garbanzo flour) or replace butter with bean puree in baked goods.
- Try bean dips, such as hummus, with vegetables or whole-grain crackers. Use hummus as a sandwich spread in place of mayonnaise.

Use the recipes on the back of this page for more ways to add legumes into your diet.

## Black Bean Burger

Makes: 4 burgers

### Ingredients:

1 can black beans, rinsed and drained  
2 cloves garlic  
¼ red onion, chopped  
½ c red bell pepper  
½ jalapeno pepper  
2 Tbsp cilantro  
½ c panko bread crumbs  
Salt and pepper  
4 whole-wheat buns  
Lettuce, tomato slices  
Cheese (optional)



### Method:

1. Mix beans, garlic, onion, peppers, cilantro, salt, and pepper in food processor. Blend until well-mixed and slightly chunky.
2. Form into patties (~½ c each) and coat with bread crumbs.
3. Bake in 400° F for 15-20 minutes, or sauté in a nonstick pan on both sides until are crispy.

### Nutrition Facts per 1 burger:

Calories 288, Saturated Fat 0.4 g, Total Carbohydrate 51 g, Dietary Fiber 9.5 g, Protein 14 g

## Indian Spinach Dahl

Makes: 4 servings

### Ingredients:

¼ c onion, diced  
½ Tbsp butter  
1 c water  
½ c lentils  
2 c fresh spinach (packed)  
½ tsp each turmeric and chili powder  
1 tsp curry powder  
¼ tsp salt

### Method:

1. Rinse lentils, then soak for 20-30 minutes.
2. In a saucepan, melt butter and sauté onions for 10 minutes until tender.
3. Add water and bring to a boil. Stir in lentils, salt, turmeric, chili powder, and curry powder. Cover pan and simmer for 15 minutes or until water is absorbed.
4. Stir in spinach and cook for 3-5 minutes until wilted.

Serve over steamed rice.

### Nutrition Facts per serving (without rice):

Calories 110, Saturated Fat 1 g, Total Carbohydrate 18 g, Dietary Fiber 4 g, Protein 7.5 g

Adapted from [www.food-india.com](http://www.food-india.com)

## Chickpea Hummus

Makes: 1 pint hummus

### Ingredients:

2 cans chickpeas, rinsed and drained  
4 cloves garlic  
2 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil  
½ c tahini paste  
1 lemon, juiced  
¼ tsp cayenne pepper  
1 ½ tsp cumin  
2 tsp paprika  
Salt and pepper

### Method

1. In a food processor, puree chickpeas, lemon juice, garlic, and olive oil for 1-2 minutes.
2. Add tahini paste, cayenne, cumin, paprika, salt, and pepper, and puree until smooth.

Serve with raw vegetables, baked chips, or whole-grain crackers.

### Nutrition Facts per ¼ c serving:

Calories 205, Saturated Fat 1.5 g, Total Carbohydrate 17 g, Dietary Fiber 4 g, Protein 8 g

## White Bean Soup

Makes: 8 servings

### Ingredients:

1 lb dried white beans, soaked overnight  
2 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil  
2 large onions, finely chopped  
2 stalks celery, finely chopped  
2 large carrots, finely chopped  
1 quart low-sodium chicken broth  
2 large ripe tomatoes, peeled and mashed  
2 tsp dried oregano  
1/8 tsp cayenne pepper  
Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste



### Method:

1. Drain beans and cook in a large covered pot of boiling water until tender, about 1 ½ hrs. Drain.
2. Heat oil in a soup pot over medium heat. Sauté onions, celery, and carrots for 3-5 minutes. Add broth, beans, tomatoes, oregano, cayenne, salt, and pepper. Simmer until vegetables are tender, about 20 minutes. Adjust seasonings if needed.

### Nutrition Facts per serving:

Calories 255, Saturated Fat 1 g, Total Carbohydrate 42 g, Dietary Fiber 11 g, Protein 14 g

Adapted from [www.eatingwell.com](http://www.eatingwell.com)