

Dried Lentils for Beginners



How to Cook Dried Lentils

You will need:

1 cup dried green/brown lentils

3 cups unsalted water

Instructions:

- Rinse dried lentils and inspect for debris. Place unsalted water in a 3.5 quart saucepan.
- Bring water to a boil and then add lentils. Cover pan and turn down heat and simmer for 25 -30 min.
- Taste lentils as they cook to see if they are the desired consistency.
- Lentils should be more firm if you are eating them plain or in a salad.
- Lentils should be softer if you are using them in a soup or stew.

How to Puree Dried Lentils

You will need:

3 cups of cooked lentils

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup water

Instructions:

- Pour $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water into a food processor.
- Add cooked lentils and process until a smooth puree resembling canned pumpkin forms.
- Lentils are smoother if you puree them while they are still warm from being cooked.
- If texture seems too thick, add another tablespoon or so of water.
- Pureed lentils can be used to replace up to half the fat or butter in most recipes.
- Substituting with lentil puree may have some mild effect on the final texture but very little on taste.

How to Store Lentils

Dried Lentils:

- Dried lentils have an indefinite shelf life, but for best flavor, use lentils within one year.
- Dried lentils should be stored in a sealed package or airtight container in a cool, dry place.

Cooked Lentils:

- Cooked lentils (whole or pureed) may be refrigerated for 2 -4 days if stored in an airtight container.

Frozen Cooked Lentils:

- Cooked lentils may be frozen for up to six months.
- Store frozen lentils in 1 cup quantities in plastic zip lock baggies for easy use in recipes.
- Frozen cooked lentils may fall apart when defrosted if not handled gently.

Important Facts about Lentils

1. Lentils and soybeans are the vegetables with the highest level of protein.
2. Lentils have a sticky substance that traps cholesterol and moves it out of the body.
3. Lentil's high fiber content prevents blood sugar levels from rising rapidly after meals.
4. Lentils are insoluble, which means they can help with bowel disorders.
5. Lentils are high in magnesium which improves the flow of blood throughout the body.
6. Lentils, 2 servings per week, can cut the risk of colon cancer by 47%.
7. Lentils cost about \$0.30 per serving. Hamburger costs about \$1.20 per serving.
8. Lentils have 115 calories per serving. Hamburger has 244 calories per serving.
9. Lentils have 0% cholesterol, 0.2% sugar, 0% sodium, and 0% of all kinds of fat.
10. Lentils are 25% protein, which is 2x the protein content of wheat; 3x that of rice.
11. Lentils (1 cup cooked) provide 15 g of fiber. Most people need 30+ grams per day.
12. Lentils (100g) contain as much potassium as bananas (100g).
13. Lentils can be prepared quickly. Just cook until tender and add to favorite recipe.
14. Lentils contain vitamin A which helps reduce oxidation damage to cells.
15. Lentils contain zinc which is necessary to help fight infections.
16. Lentils can be a healthy alternative to cholesterol-containing meats, such as beef.
17. Lentils may help you maintain a healthy weight because they are filled with fiber.
18. Lentils that are brown in color are less expensive than the red or green ones.
19. Lentils will boost iron absorption when eaten with a vitamin C source like oranges.
20. Lentils increase your fiber intake when added to soups, stews, or salads.
21. Lentils, when pureed, can be stirred into soups or pasta sauce.
22. Lentils can be considered a protein or a vegetable in your diet.
23. Lentils contain 56% more antioxidant capacity than blueberries.
24. Lentils sop of flavor like a sponge. They absorb flavors from herbs, broths, and spices.
25. Lentils provide 90% of the daily recommended amount of folic acid, more than any other food.
26. Lentils are grown in Canada, the greatest lentil producer in the world.
27. Lentils have a very mild flavor and, when pureed, will not be noticed in foods.
28. Lentils are a great source of iron, a key to energy production and metabolism.

Dried Lentils Recipes



Cook's Choice Award

Lentil Soup

You will need:

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups lentils, picked over and rinsed	3 strips of bacon, cut into 1/2 inch pieces	
3 medium carrots, peeled, halved lengthwise, and cut into $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thickness		1 large onion, chopped
2 (14.5 oz.) cans chicken broth	3 garlic cloves, minced	2 tbsp. tomato paste
$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. dried thyme	1 tbsp. red-wine vinegar	salt and pepper

Instructions:

- In a 5 quart sauce pan with a tight fitting cover, cook bacon over medium heat until browned and crisp.
- Pour off all but 1 tbsp. fat. Add onion and carrots; cook until softened, about 5 minutes.
- Stir in garlic and cook until fragrant; about 30 seconds. Stir in tomato paste and cook 1 minute.
- Add lentils, thyme, broth, and 2 cups water. Bring to a boil; reduce to a simmer.
- Cover; cook until lentils are tender, 30 to 45 minutes.

Lentil Taco Dip

You will need:

1 cup lentils, sorted and rinsed	3 cups water	1 purple onion, peeled and chopped
2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced	4 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil	1 (16 oz.) jar chunky salsa
1 packet low sodium taco seasoning mix	tortilla chips	sour cream, lettuce, etc.

Instructions:

- Rinse dried lentils and inspect for debris. Place unsalted water in a 3.5 quart saucepan.
- Bring water to a boil and then add lentils. Cover pan and turn down heat and simmer for 25 -30 min.
- Drain away remaining water and set aside. Add onion, garlic, and olive oil to a skillet.
- Cook on medium heat until soft. Add lentils, salsa and taco seasoning to mixture; stir to coat mixture.
- Cook until hot throughout. Serve with tortilla chips, sour cream, lettuce, tomato, etc.

Spaghetti Sauce with Lentils

You will need:

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup cooked lentils	$\frac{1}{2}$ pound ground meat, browned and drained	$\frac{1}{3}$ cup grated Parmesan cheese
spaghetti sauce recipe of your choice or use a 24 oz. jar of spaghetti sauce		1 box of pasta

Instructions:

- Prepare spaghetti sauce of your choice. Brown ground meat and drain off excess fat.
- Add ground meat and cooked lentils to sauce. Simmer for 30 minutes.
- Boil pasta according to instructions on the box.
- Serve cooked pasta with sauce that has been topped with grated cheese.

Lentils and Rice Casserole

You will need:

3/4 cup lentils, picked over and rinsed	3 cups chicken broth	3/4 cup onion, chopped
3/4 cup brown rice, uncooked	1/4 cup water	1/2 tsp. basil
1/2 tsp. oregano	1/2 tsp. thyme	1/2 cup mozzarella cheese, divided
1/2 lb. ground sausage or other meat browned and drained; (optional)		

Instructions:

- In a 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ quart casserole, add the chicken broth, lentils, onions, brown rice, water, browned meat, and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cheese.
- Cover and bake at 350 degrees F. for 1 hour or until lentils and rice are cooked.
- Add more broth if casserole seems dry.
- Top with remaining cheese and bake another 2 - 3 minutes until cheese is melted.

Lentils and Bacon Salad

You will need:

1 cup cooked brown/green lentils	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup minced bacon	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup minced white onion
$\frac{1}{4}$ cup red wine vinegar	2 tsp. honey	1 tsp. mustard
$\frac{1}{4}$ cup sunflower seeds	salt to taste	pepper to taste
4 cups mixed greens; Chinese cabbage, spinach, arugula, or other greens		

Instructions:

- Cook bacon until golden and lightly crispy. Remove and set aside on a paper towel to drain.
- Drain excess fat from pan, leaving about 1 tbsp. of fat. Add onion and sauté until tender.
- Add red wine vinegar and stir in honey, mustard, and lentils. Season with salt and pepper.
- Remove from heat. Toss salad greens in a large bowl. Toss in lentil mixture and sunflower seeds.
- Serve immediately in bowls and garnish with bacon.

Citrus Berry Shake with Lentils

You will need:

1 cup cooked lentils	2 cups ripe strawberries, chopped	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups ripe blueberries
1 cup crushed ice	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup plain Greek yogurt	3 tbsp. lemon juice
3 tbsp. honey	2 tsp. vanilla extract	

Instructions:

- Place all ingredients in a blender and puree until delightfully smooth.

Quick Ways to Use Cooked and Pureed Lentils

- Add $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of cooked lentils to your favorite casserole or sloppy joe mix.
- Prepare canned vegetable soup according to instructions. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked lentils and simmer for 15 minutes.
- Add 3/4 cup pureed lentils to your favorite brownie recipe or use a boxed brownie mix. Add an additional two minutes to baking time.