

Adding More Pulse Foods in Your Diet

Pulses are a type of legume characterized by seeds that grow in pods. These ancient crops have been used in worldwide cuisine for thousands of years. Pulses include chickpeas, lentils and dry peas.

Pulse foods are rich sources of protein, fiber, vitamins such as folate, and minerals such as iron and potassium. They are low in fat and sodium and are naturally gluten and cholesterol free. Researches have reported that regular consumption of pulses may reduce the risk of heart disease, diabetes and certain types of cancer.

Chickpeas/Garbanzo Beans. Can be used by washing and removing any small stones that may be present. They require soaking prior to cooking.

- Traditional soaking includes covering one pound of chickpeas with 10 cups of water and refrigerate six to eight hours or overnight.
- You can also hot soak by bringing the water to a boil and adding the 1 pound of chickpeas and returning to a boil. You should then allow them to stand at room temperature for two to three hours.
- Quick soak can be done by bringing 10 cups of water to a boil and then adding the chick peas. Boil two the three hours and let stand at room temperature one hour.

One cup of dry chickpeas and 2 cups of water will yield about 2 cups of chickpeas.

Lentils requiring removing small stones. They do not need to be soaked. For every cup of lentils, add 2 ½ cups of unsalted water. Heat water to boiling then let lentils simmer for 15 to 20 minutes.

Dry Peas if they are split, they don't require soaking. Use 2 cups of water for each cup of dry peas. Heat water to boiling, the simmer split peas for about 30 minutes to desired tenderness.

For whole peas, soak in water overnight. After soaking whole peas cook whole peas for 35 to 40 minutes. 1 cup dry peas plus 2 cups o water equals about 2 cups of cooked split peas.

Tips for Cooking:

Do not cook peas, lentils or chickpeas in aluminum or cast-iron pans because these may inhibit cooking and change the color.

To save preparation time, you can precook legumes and refrigerate for up to three days before using or you can freeze them for up to six months.

Country-style Split Pea Soup

1 Tbsp. canola oil

1 c. onion

diced 1 leek, thinly sliced

1 c. celery, diced
2 cloves garlic, minced
1¼ c. dry green or yellow split peas, rinsed
3 c. chicken broth
3 c. water
1 bay leaf
¼ c. fresh parsley, chopped, or 2 teaspoons dried
1 Tbsp. seasoned salt
½ tsp. ground pepper
2 medium carrots, peeled and sliced
2 medium potatoes, peeled and diced
1 c. cooked ham, diced (optional)
1 c. plain nonfat/low-fat yogurt (optional)

In a large, heavy saucepan, heat oil then add onion, leek, celery and garlic Sauté until they are tender, about five minutes. Add peas, broth, water, bay leaf, parsley, seasoned salt and pepper. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer, stirring occasionally, for about 40 minutes, or until peas are tender. Add the carrots, potatoes and ham (optional) to the soup. Cover and simmer about 15 to 20 minutes, or until vegetables are tender but retain their shape. Add water, if necessary, to thin soup. Reduce heat. When ready to serve, remove bay leaf. Optional: Add plain yogurt, cook for five minutes. (Do not boil.) Makes 24 servings (½ c. each). Each serving has 60 calories, 0.5 g fat, 3 g protein, 10 g carbohydrates.

Source: North Dakota State Extension