



# Pulses Help You Meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans

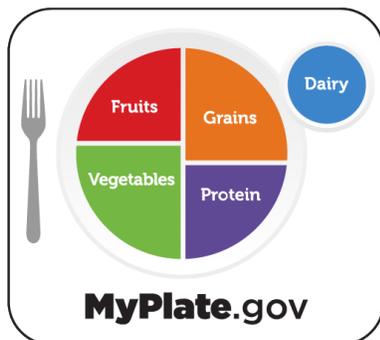


## What are pulses?

Pulses are the nutritionally dense edible seeds of legumes including dry peas, beans, lentils, and chickpeas. Simply put, pulses are delicious and nutritious.

## Pulses in the Dietary Guidelines

Choosing pulses helps ensure that you get enough protein while boosting your intake of recommended nutrients. **The 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) includes a call-out for beans, peas, and lentils as containing enough nutrients they can be considered both a protein and a vegetable.**<sup>1</sup> Just ¼ cup of pulses equals 1 oz protein, and once protein needs are met, every additional ¼ cup counts toward a vegetable serving.<sup>2,3</sup>



**1/4 cup pulses = 1 oz protein**

*A GREAT WAY to get the recommended servings of pulses is to remember the half-cup habit. This makes it easy to think about having three ½ cup pulse servings per week, which adds nutrients and fiber and improves overall health and wellbeing.<sup>6,7</sup>*



The DGA recommends three one-half cup servings of beans, peas, and lentils per week as part of a healthy eating pattern, including the Vegetarian Dietary Pattern and Mediterranean-Style Diet, and the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) eating pattern recommends 4-5 servings per week.<sup>4,5</sup>

## Meal Redo: Ditch Processed Meats for Pulses

The DGA recommends swapping processed meats such as hot dogs, sausage, or bacon for more plant-based protein, like pulses. Pulses contain up to 9 grams of protein per ½ cup serving and are high in both soluble and insoluble fiber. They are excellent sources of folate and contain high levels of potassium, magnesium, zinc, and iron. Pulses are naturally low in saturated fat and sodium as well. Besides the nutritional advantages of consuming more pulses, swapping pulses for meat twice a week reduces environmental impact.<sup>9</sup>



**CHOOSING PULSES helps ensure that you get enough protein while boosting your intake of recommended nutrients.**

## Creative Ways to Add Pulses to Meals

Pulses can be added to ground meat to extend or replace animal-based proteins. This swap can enhance the fiber and nutrient content, maintain the protein content, and save on saturated fat. Consider adding mashed pulses like beans or chickpeas to replace up to half of the recommended amount of meat in a recipe or meal.<sup>10</sup> Swap up to half of the ground meat amount with pulses, until you have the desired texture, color, and taste. For example, a beef burger blended with two thirds beef and one third lentils is juicy and tasty.<sup>11</sup>

Pulse flours can also be a valuable ingredient in commercial and food-service settings, boosting fiber and protein in products such as baked goods and pastas.

## Versatile Pulses in Cultural Eating Patterns

Pulses are a part of traditional and cultural eating patterns throughout the world including Mediterranean, African Heritage, Latin American Heritage, Asian Pyramid, Vegetarian and Vegan Pyramid. Nearly all traditional eating patterns are based on whole foods including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, pulses, nuts, seeds, herbs, spices, and plant foods while meats, dairy products and sweets are used sparingly. While chickpeas (also known as garbanzo beans) are popular in Mediterranean cooking and lentils are common in Southeast Asian dishes, all varieties of pulses are packed with nutrition. Pulses can be a part of hearty meals and finding tasty ways to use pulses can be a delicious way to amp up your nutrition. Try black beans in a breakfast burrito, lentil soup at lunch, roasted chickpeas as a snack and split peas in a curry for dinner.<sup>12,13</sup>



**VISIT** [USAPulses.org/nutrition-professionals](https://USAPulses.org/nutrition-professionals) for more information and [Pulses.org/us/pulse-recipes](https://Pulses.org/us/pulse-recipes) for more ways to enjoy pulses!



### References

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