

# Pulses in Plant-Based Main Dishes



Today's students are consuming more plant-based meals, a decision influenced by concern for sustainability and by parents' or guardians' decision to follow a plant-forward lifestyle based on health-conscious choices.



**¼ CUP pulses**  
(beans, chickpeas, lentils, dry peas)



**1 OZ. eq. meat/  
meat alternate**



## The Protein of Pulses

Pulses are a good source of plant-based protein, containing up to 9 grams of protein per ½ cup serving. They are also an excellent source of fiber and folate as well as packed with key nutrients like iron, potassium, and zinc.

## Center-Of-The-Plate

Pulses are center-of-the-plate in plant-based school menus. Just ½ cup of tasty, cooked beans, chickpeas, lentils, or dry peas will provide 2 oz. eq. meat/meat alternate at lunch. Served at breakfast, pulses will add protein to the menu and help satisfy students' appetites. A ¼ cup serving of pulses will provide a 1 oz. meat/meat alternate at breakfast and can be used to meet one of the grain requirements. When served as a vegetable at breakfast, pulses will count toward the fruit serving.

Pulses are the main attraction in salads, soups, sandwiches, bowls, burgers, and burritos. Find menu inspiration with these plant-based offerings:

### Plant-Based Power Bowls



Orange Sriracha Protein Bowl

### Main Course Grab-and-Go Salads



Peas-on-Earth Taco Salad

### Veggie Burgers



Asian-Style Sweet & Spicy Veggie Burger

### Tacos and Burritos



Lentil Street Tacos

### Globally Inspired



Split Pea Curry

## What's in a Name?

### FLEXITARIAN

Combining the words “flexible” and “vegetarian” gives us the flexitarian, a popular eating pattern that emphasizes plant proteins, like pulses, whole grains, fruits, vegetables, nuts, and eggs but also makes room for smaller portions of dairy and meats.

### PLANT-BASED

“Plant-Based” is an eating pattern based on fruits, vegetables, grains, legumes, nuts, and seeds with few or no animal products. Some may think of plant-based as a vegan diet, but there can be flexibility in the definition of plant-based.

Source: Menus of Change, a joint initiative of the Culinary Institute of America and Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Department of Nutrition. For more information, visit [www.menusofchange.org](http://www.menusofchange.org)

### VEGAN

A vegan eating pattern excludes all animal products including meat, poultry, fish, eggs, milk, cheese, and other dairy products as well as ingredients from animal sources such as gelatin. May exclude honey.

### VEGETARIAN

A general term that encompasses a variety of plant-forward eating styles.

## The Plants We Eat and Meal Components



### MEAT ALTERNATES

Pulses  
(beans, chickpeas, lentils, dry peas),  
Nuts, Seeds, Soy Foods



### VEGETABLE

Beans and Peas  
(beans, chickpeas, lentils, dry peas),  
Red/Orange, Dark Green,  
Starchy, Other



### FRUIT

Fresh, Canned, Frozen,  
Dried, Juice



### WHOLE GRAINS

Wheat, Quinoa, Rice,  
Oats, Corn, Sorghum



For more pulse-inspiration, including recipes, to help you serve more pulses in your programs visit us online at [www.usapulses.org/schools](http://www.usapulses.org/schools) and sign up for our school foodservice newsletter [here](#).