

Learning About Lentils

Lentils are a type of pulse, the dry edible seed of a legume. They grow in pods and appear as lens-shaped seeds. The most common varieties of lentils used in school nutrition are green and split red lentils and can be served both hot and cold. Whole lentils hold their shape well and are used in side dishes, soups, power bowls, and main-course dishes. Split lentils are often used as thickeners in soup, curries, and purees. Split lentils have their seed coat removed and the inner part of the lentil has been split in half helping them cook faster than whole lentils.

Lentils Are Easy!

- Lentils do not need to be pre-soaked and cook quickly.
- Lentils can be seasoned with a variety of spices and herbs.
- Leftover cooked lentils and lentil purees can be frozen for up to 3 months.

Cooking lentils is easy as 1,2,3

1 Rinse lentils with water.

- Check for broken pieces of lentils and small rocks or twigs.
- Rinsing removes any dust or debris.
- No need to soak.

2 Combine lentils and water.

- Cook in a steam jacketed kettle, tilt skillet, combi oven, oven, or pressure cooker.
- For every cup of lentils, use 2 ½ to 3 cups of water
- 1 cup dry lentils make 2 ½ to 3 cups cooked lentils

3 Simmer.

- Most types of lentils need to simmer for 15 to 20 minutes until tender
- Split red lentils will be tender in only 5 to 10 minutes



Easy Swaps with Lentils



Half or all of the meat in some dishes can be replaced with cooked lentils. Consider using lentils in taco meat, chili, sloppy joes, burger patties, or lasagna. This reduces food costs, and increases important nutrients, like fiber, in popular dishes while also meeting meal pattern requirements.



+ LENTIL MATH +

 **1 pound** DRY lentils = **2 ¾ cups** DRY lentils 

7 to 7 ½ cups COOKED lentils = **or** **about 14 - ½ cup** servings per each pound DRY lentils



Lentils support your menu in a variety of ways and can be prepared whole, blended, crispy, or pureed. Here are various ways to use lentils in your school menus.



Burgers
(Asian-Style Veggie Burger)



Tacos
(Lentil Street Taco)



Quesadillas
(Breakfast Lentil Quesadilla)



Meatballs
(Farmer's Meatball Grinders)



Chili
(Lentil and Beef Chili)



Soups or Stews
(Split Pea Curry)



Dips or Spreads
(Harissa Red Lentil Hummus)



Power Bowls



Muffins
(ReMarkKable Apple Muffins)

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