

PULSES: LENTILS



LOG IN!

1 Read the information about lentils and answer the following questions.

Biological name: Lens esculenta or Lens culinaris

Family: Fabaceae

Season: all year round

Characteristics

Lentils are the fruit of a small-sized annual crop plant about 45 cm high with thick branches. Its pods are short and flat and they contain single or double seeds that can be oval or round, flat or heart-shaped. There are several dozen different varieties which differ in colour (yellow, red, green, orange or black) and size: macrosperm (big) lentils and microsperm (small) lentils with different characteristics, taste and consistency.

Harvested once they are wholly ripe; the biggest lentil producers are India, Canada, Turkey and the United States.

Nutritional facts

Lentils are an excellent source of potassium, phosphorus, iron and folic acid; moreover, they are rich in zinc, copper, magnesium, pantothenic acid, thiamine, niacin and vitamin B6.

Use

Lentils can be used whole or in a purée; in soups, salads or casseroles and compared to other types of pulses, are relatively quick and easy to prepare, as they readily absorb a variety of wonderful flavours from other foods and seasonings. They often pair with rice, pasta or sausages; can be ground into flour or used in salads after sprouting. Found in Mediterranean, Middle Eastern and South Asian cuisine; in India lentils dishes are known as *dhal*.

	for 100 g of boiled product
water	69.6%
protein	9 g
fat	0.4 g
sugar	20 g
fibre	3.9 g
calories	116

- 1 What shape are lentil seeds?
- 2 How many different types of lentils are there?
- 3 How do they differ in colour and size?
- 4 Which countries produce most lentils?
- 5 What advantages do lentils have over other pulses?
- 6 Which cuisines are they characteristic of?

ON THE NET!

2 Have a look at the video *Learning about Lentils: Indian Food Made Easy* with celebrity chef Anjum Anand and decide if these sentences are true (T) or false (F).

- 1 Lentils are the cornerstone of Indian food. _____
- 2 Bengalis are known for using sour flavours. _____
- 3 Softer red lentils go into soups but harder lentils go well with lamb and chicken. _____
- 4 *Ghee* is a clarified butter that has a lower cooking temperature than most oils. _____
- 5 *Tarka* is when you temper your spices in hot oil. _____
- 6 You don't cover the *dhal* with a lid as this helps combine the flavours. _____



LOG OUT!

3 Write a recipe using lentils which is typical of Italian cuisine.