

Cooking Lentils: A Simple Guide

What Are Lentils?

Lentils are small dried legumes. They are affordable, filling, and easy to cook. Lentils are a good source of protein and fiber and do not need to be soaked before cooking.

Nutrition & Benefits

Lentils are a nutrient-dense protein source that supports energy and fullness. They are high in fiber, plant protein, and key nutrients that help keep you healthy.

How to Recognize & Store Lentils

What to look for:

- Small, flat, lens-shaped pieces
- Colors may be brown, green, red, yellow, or black
- Dry, with no strong smell or moisture



Storage Tips

- Keep dry lentils in a cool, dark cupboard in a sealed container.
- Dry lentils stay good for 1–2 years if kept dry and sealed.
- Cooked lentils: store in a covered container in the fridge for 3–5 days.

How to Cook Lentils (Basic Method)

- 1) Rinse lentils in a strainer and remove any small stones.
- 2) Add lentils to a pot with liquid:
 - 3 cups water for 1 cup lentils, or
 - Use broth or stock instead of water if available.
 - If using a bouillon cube or powder, dissolve it in water first, then use that liquid.
- 3) Bring to a boil, then lower heat and simmer.
- 4) Cook until tender:
 - Red or yellow lentils: about 15 minutes
 - Brown or green lentils: 20–30 minutes
- 5) Drain extra liquid if needed.



Quick Tip

Lentils can replace or stretch meat in many meals. Even a small amount makes dishes more filling and nutritious.

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Tips to Boost Flavor

- Lentils soak up flavor and work well with simple foods.
- Cook in broth or stock instead of water if you have it.
- If using a bouillon cube or powder, dissolve it in water first.
- Add onion or garlic (fresh or powdered).
- Stir in canned tomatoes, tomato sauce, or tomato paste.
- Season with what you have: salt, pepper, chili powder, cumin, curry powder, oregano, or thyme.
- Mix in rice, pasta, or potatoes to make meals more filling.
- Add leftover vegetables or small amounts of meat (fresh, frozen, or canned) to stretch meals.
- Finish with a small splash of oil, butter, lemon juice, or vinegar if available.

How to Use Lentils

- ✓ Add to soups or stews
- ✓ Mix with rice, pasta, or potatoes
- ✓ Stir in canned tomatoes or broth
- ✓ Toss with seasonings or herbs
- ✓ Use in salads, tacos, or wraps



Easy Recipes

Simple Lentils & Rice

Ingredients

- 1 cup dry lentils
- 2 cups water or broth
- 1 cup cooked rice (any kind)
- Salt & pepper to taste (optional)

Instructions

1. Cook lentils with water/broth until tender.
2. Stir in cooked rice and warm through.
3. Season if available.
4. Variation: Add a can of diced tomatoes or spices (cumin/chili) if you have them.

Basic Lentil Soup

Ingredients

- 1 cup lentils
- 4 cups water or broth
- 1 can diced tomatoes (optional)
- ½ tsp salt (optional)
- Pinch of pepper or any spice you like

Instructions

1. Rinse lentils.
2. Combine lentils + liquid in a pot and bring to boil.
3. Add tomatoes/spices if you have them.
4. Simmer ~20–25 min until lentils are soft.
5. Serve warm.

Tip: Add any extra veggies (frozen/canned) to stretch the soup.