AN EVERYDAY GUIDE TO

Cooking with Legumes
Legumes: we are cost effective nutritional powerhouses essential for your kitchen pantry

In many Australian households, we are misunderstood so to help you get to know us, here are a few bits and pieces.

**Chickpeas**

If I were a person... “I would be very glamorous; fit and healthy. I care about myself and how I present. You would find me sitting in a café eating a Mediterranean salad.”

Melanie McGrice, Advanced APD

I also contain essential minerals such as iron, zinc and calcium. As the iron in me is not as well absorbed as the iron in meat, try to eat me with a food rich in vitamin C. Iron and zinc help to support immunity, and calcium is important for strong bones and teeth.

I go well with Moroccan and Middle Eastern Cuisine and feature in a Classic Hummus. You will also find me centre-stage in Moroccan Chickpea & Basmati Rice Pilaf.

**Red Kidney Beans**

If I were a person... “I’m red, so I’m a standout in the crowd, a figure who does not really fly under the radar. Although I have a tough exterior, I’m a softy on the inside.”

Kate Di Prima, APD

If you cook half a cup of me, I will provide 4.9g of fibre – over 20% of the daily recommended intake for fibre for young children (up to 13yrs). Fibre is essential for maintaining digestive health.

I go well with Mexican, Spanish and South American dishes. I am the main game featuring in a Red Kidney Bean Burrito and reveal my softer side in a Minestrone Soup.

**Red Lentils**

If I were a person... “I would be a gymnast because I am small and low in body fat but dynamic and full of energy for performance.”

Nikki Hart, NZ Registered Nutritionist

Like most legumes, I have a low Glycemic Index (GI) (GI = 29). Low GI foods are digested and absorbed slower, meaning they can help fill you up for longer.

I go well with Indian cuisine, but am extremely versatile. Watch me fuel your kid’s performance in Spaghetti Bolognaise with Red Lentils and in a Red Lentil & Beef Burger.

**Baked Beans**

(Some people know me as navy beans)

If I were a person... “I’d be the popular one of the group. Loyal, reliable and great fun.”

Dr Joanna McMillan, APD

Like other members of the legume family, I contain virtually no fat, and I’m rich in fibre, B vitamins and protein. Folate is a B vitamin which is important for reducing tiredness and supporting your immune system.

Although well known for my match with toast, I’m more versatile than you might think. I go well in many family favourites including Baked Potatoes filled with Baked Beans. I’m a crowd pleaser in Zucchini, Baked Beans & Cheese Mini Muffins.

“With our love of travel, we tend to bring favourite dishes from foreign cultures home so we will see even more use of legumes in our diet as time goes on.”  
NIKKI HART, NZ REGISTERED NUTRITIONIST
Now is a great time to liven up your weekly meal plan with quick and easy legume-based dishes to feed the whole family.

High in protein and other essential nutrients, Australia’s most popular legumes; chickpeas, red lentils, red kidney beans and everyday baked beans, are easy to use, convenient and delicious in so many dishes.

The Grains & Legumes Nutrition Council™ recommends we eat legumes 2-3 times every week. This is because they provide a bundle of essential nutrients like protein, different types of fibre and zinc that can help keep you satisfied and help maintain digestive and immune health. However, according to recent research, most Australians don’t even come close to eating that amount. The figures are particularly low for our children as only one in every 20 Australian kids eat legumes regularly.

“Legumes are excellent for the family budget and being a high protein, low GI food, keep you feeling satisfied and fuller for longer - great for hungry children and teenagers.”

MICHELLE BROOM, APD, NUTRITION PROGRAM MANAGER, GRAINS & LEGUMES NUTRITION COUNCIL™

This booklet contains a collection of quick and easy, delicious recipes prepared and tested by recent MasterChef home economist Tina McLeish. Tina has created meals that your family will love including simple to prepare main dishes, soups, salads and snacks that are likely to quickly become part of your family’s weekly meal favourites.

We hope you enjoy these recipes and that you too will become a legume fan. Remember if you want more great tasting legume recipes, visit www.glnc.org.au.

MICHELLE BROOM, APD, Nutrition Program Manager, Grains & Legumes Nutrition Council™
Work with whatever you have in your pantry or fridge. Swap chicken for prawns and use a range of vegetables i.e. zucchini, capsicum or broccoli.

To lower sodium, try no added salt canned varieties.

If you would like to use dried chickpeas use ½ cup and cook according to instructions on page 8.

Average per serve: Energy 1990kJ, Protein 27g, Total Fat 8g, Saturated Fat 1g, Carbohydrate 68g, Fibre 13g, Sodium 846mg.

Method

1. Heat half the oil in a large heavy based frying pan with a lid and cook onions over medium heat for 10 minutes or until reddish brown. Set aside half the onions. Add remaining oil and chicken and stir until golden all over. Add spices and stir until fragrant.

2. Add garlic, rice, chickpeas, dates and pumpkin and stir to coat in spices. Add stock and scrape the bottom of the pan. Make sure the stock covers the meat, add cinnamon sticks and bring to the boil. Reduce heat to low, cover with a lid and simmer for 5 minutes, remove lid and add peas, stir gently and cover for another 5 minutes.

3. Top with reserved onions and fresh coriander. Serve lemon wedges and yoghurt on the side.

Tips

- Work with whatever you have in your pantry or fridge. Swap chicken for prawns and use a range of vegetables i.e. zucchini, capsicum or broccoli.
- To lower sodium, try no added salt canned varieties.
- If you would like to use dried chickpeas use ½ cup and cook according to instructions on page 8.

Moroccan chickpea & basmati rice pilaf

Serves: 4
Prep: 10 minutes
Cook: 30 minutes

1 tablespoon sunflower oil
2 large brown onions, finely sliced
300g chicken breast, diced
1 tablespoon Moroccan spice blend
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 cup basmati rice, rinsed and drained
2 x 420g cans chickpeas, rinsed and drained
½ cup chopped dates
2 cups diced pumpkin
700ml salt-reduced chicken stock
2 cinnamon sticks (optional)
1 cup frozen green peas
Natural yoghurt, lemon wedges, fresh coriander sprigs, to serve
Steamed green beans with toasted flaked almonds, to serve

“10-15 years ago it would have been unusual to see children eating puréed chickpeas but now it’s commonplace in many fridges across the world.”

NIKKI HART, NZ REGISTERED NUTRITIONIST
Use frozen corn kernels or canned corn kernels if you don’t have corn cobs, add to pan with kidney beans.

To lower sodium, try no added salt canned varieties.

If you would like to use dried kidney beans use ½ cup and cook according to instructions on page 8.

Average per serve: Energy 2440kJ, Protein 25g, Total Fat 22g, Saturated Fat 6g, Carbohydrate 60g, Fibre 9g, Sodium 210mg.
Swap passata with fresh or canned diced tomatoes for a chunkier textured sauce.

If you would like to use dried lentils use ¾ cup and cook according to instructions on page 8.

Swap plain pasta for wholemeal to add extra fibre.

"I think the trick to getting children to accept lentils is add it slowly to meals they love, without being obvious about it."

NIKKI HART, NZ REGISTERED NUTRITIONIST

**Method**

1. Heat oil in a large heavy based saucepan over medium-high heat and brown mince. Add onion, carrot, and celery and cook for 5 minutes or until starting to soften.

2. Add garlic, lentils, passata, oregano and stock. Cover and simmer for 20 minutes or until flavour has developed and sauce has thickened. Add spinach, lemon juice and freshly cracked pepper.

3. Bring a large covered saucepan of water to the boil, add spaghetti, stir once and cook uncovered for the amount of time specified on the pack. Drain pasta.

4. To serve, divide spaghetti between serving bowls, ladle sauce onto spaghetti, top with grated parmesan and serve a green salad on the side.

**Spaghetti bolognaise with red lentils**

**Serves:** 4  
**Prep:** 10 minutes  
**Cook:** 40 minutes

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 300g lean beef mince
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 carrot, chopped
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 cup dried red lentils, washed and drained
- 700ml tomato passata (tomato purée)
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 500ml salt-reduced chicken or beef stock
- 2 cups shredded spinach or silverbeet
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 200g spaghetti

Finely grated parmesan cheese and green salad, to serve

- Swap passata with fresh or canned diced tomatoes for a chunkier textured sauce.
- If you would like to use dried lentils use ¾ cup and cook according to instructions on page 8.
- Swap plain pasta for wholemeal to add extra fibre.

**Nutritional Info**

*Average per serve:* Energy 1970kJ, Protein 31g, Total Fat 15g, Saturated Fat 5g, Carbohydrate 50g, Fibre 6g, Sodium 760mg.
Try half mashed baked beans and half mashed sweet potato for a low-GI topping on your next shepherd’s or cottage pie.

General Tips
- Make ahead and reheat to serve.
- Wrap leftovers individually in foil and freeze. Can then be reheated in the oven for a quick snack.
- To lower sodium, try no added salt canned varieties.

Tips
- Try half mashed baked beans and half mashed sweet potato for a low-GI topping on your next shepherd’s or cottage pie.

Method
1. Preheat oven to 220°C fan forced. Halve potatoes lengthways and place on a baking tray, cut-side up. Bake potatoes for 40 minutes or until soft enough to scoop.
2. Combine baked beans, corn and peas in a bowl. Scoop a little of the potato out of the centre of each half, chop and add to the baked bean mix.
3. Overfill each potato with mixture and top with cheese. Place under a hot grill for 10 minutes or until mixture has warmed through and cheese has melted and started to brown. Serve warm.

Average per serve: Energy 1100kJ, Protein 13g, Total Fat 6g, Saturated Fat 3g, Carbohydrate 32g, Fibre 11g, Sodium 465mg.

Baked potatoes filled with baked beans, cheese, corn & peas

Serves: 4  
Prep: 5 minutes  
Cook: 50 minutes

4 medium desiree or low-GI potatoes  
1 x 420g can baked beans  
½ cup frozen corn kernels  
½ cup frozen green peas  
40g grated tasty cheese  
Green salad, to serve

“My mum would make baked beans and cheese on toast when Dad wasn’t home. It was her cheat meal but we loved it.”

DR JOANNA MCMILLAN, APD
The recipes in this booklet use canned legumes because they are quick and easy. Many people think dried legumes are hard to prepare and need hours of soaking and boiling before you can use them. This just isn’t true as there is a quicker way. If you’d like to start from scratch follow either the quick or the traditional methods below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Red Lentils</th>
<th>Chickpeas</th>
<th>Kidney Beans</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amount of water per 1 cup of legumes</td>
<td>3 cups</td>
<td>3 cups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traditional Preparation Method</td>
<td>Overnight soaking not required. Use the quick preparation method.</td>
<td>Soak 6-8 hours. Drain. Place in fresh water, bring to boil and simmer for approx. 20-30 minutes.</td>
<td>Soak 6-8 hours. Drain. Place in fresh water, bring to boil and simmer for approx. 30-40 minutes.</td>
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* This method does not require soaking.
If low salt canned options are not available make sure you wash the legumes for 2 minutes.

“A great thing about dried legumes is that they hold their form in dishes. By holding their shape, they are a great addition to meals and don’t become lost in the dish.”

KATE DI PRIMA, APD

- Cook extra to what you need and freeze drained and rinsed beans in small zip lock bags to throw into a soup or casserole or as a wrap filling when you need a quick lunch or dinner.
Use the hamburger mix to make mini meatballs. Great for lunchboxes with a little side of natural yoghurt or sweet chilli sauce or a quick dinner with pasta and sauce.

If you would like to use dried lentils use ¾ cup and cook according to instructions on page 8.

Average per serve: Energy 2100kJ, Protein 27g, Total Fat 14g, Saturated Fat 4g, Carbohydrate 61g, Fibre 8g, Sodium 1570mg.
For an authentic twist, add finely sliced spinach or silverbeet for the last 10 minutes of cooking.

Try brown rice or quinoa instead of pasta.

Try half stock and half water.

To lower sodium, try no added salt canned varieties.

If you would like to use dried kidney beans use ½ cup and cook according to instructions on page 8.

“Legumes are great flavour absorbers – add whatever sauce you like and it will taste better with legumes.”

Melanie McGrice, APD

Minestrone soup with red kidney beans

Serves: 4
Prep: 10 minutes
Cook: 40 minutes

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 onion, finely chopped
2 carrots, diced
2 sticks celery, diced
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 bay leaf
1 cup tomato passata (tomato purée)
1L salt-reduced chicken stock
½ cup wholemeal small pasta shapes
2 zucchini, diced
100g green beans, 2cm lengths
1 x 420g can kidney beans, rinsed and drained
Finely grated parmesan, to serve
¼ cup chopped flat leaf parsley, to serve

Method

1. Heat oil in a large saucepan and add onions. Cook over medium-high heat for 5 minutes until golden brown. Add carrot and celery and cook for 5 minutes or until starting to soften.

2. Add garlic, bay leaf, passata, stock and pasta and bring to the boil. Cover and cook for 15 minutes over low heat, stirring occasionally until pasta is almost cooked.

3. Add zucchini, green beans and kidney beans and cook, covered, for 5-10 minutes until green beans are just tender.

4. Serve with a little grated parmesan, freshly chopped parsley and black pepper.

Tips

- For an authentic twist, add finely sliced spinach or silverbeet for the last 10 minutes of cooking.
- Try brown rice or quinoa instead of pasta.
- Try half stock and half water.
- To lower sodium, try no added salt canned varieties.
- If you would like to use dried kidney beans use ½ cup and cook according to instructions on page 8.

Nutritional Info

Average per serve: Energy 1140kJ, Protein 13g, Total Fat 7g, Saturated Fat 2g, Carbohydrate 33g, Fibre 6g, Sodium 1120mg.
**Classic hummus**

*Serves: 6 as a snack  
*Prep: 5 minutes  
*Cook: 0 minutes

1 x 420g can chickpeas, rinsed and drained  
1 clove garlic, crushed  
½ teaspoon ground cumin  
1 tablespoon lemon juice  
1 tablespoon tahini  
1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil  
2 tablespoons water, optional  
Vegetable sticks, to serve  
Crisp homemade oven-baked whole grain pita triangles, to serve

**Method**

1. Place chickpeas in a food processor with garlic, cumin, lemon juice, tahini and oil. Blend to a smooth purée. Add a little water if it needs thinning.

2. Serve with vegetable sticks and crisp pita.

**Tips**

- Substitute tahini with roast capsicum for a roast capsicum hummus.
- To lower sodium, try no added salt canned varieties.
- If you would like to use dried chickpeas use ½ cup and cook according to instructions on page 8.
- Keep a can of chickpeas in the cupboard for when you need a quick dip as a snack or for when guests drop by. The other pantry ingredients are usually on hand – olive oil, lemon juice, garlic, pepper.

**Nutritional Info**

Average per serve: Energy 810kJ, Protein 7g, Total Fat 7g, Saturated Fat 1g, Carbohydrate 23g, Fibre 5g, Sodium 290mg.

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**Zucchini, baked beans, & cheese mini muffins**

*Makes: 24 mini muffins  
*Prep: 10 minutes  
*Cook: 20 minutes

1 cup plain flour  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
½ cup (30g) grated tasty cheese  
1 zucchini, grated  
1 tablespoon finely chopped chives  
1 teaspoon thyme leaves, plus extra for top  
1 egg  
½ cup buttermilk  
1 x 220g can baked beans

**Method**

1. Preheat oven to 180°C fan forced. Line a 24-hole mini muffin tin with paper cases.

2. Whisk flour, baking powder, cheese, zucchini, chives, thyme and black pepper in a large bowl until zucchini is coated in flour.

3. Mix egg, buttermilk and baked beans in a jug until combined. Fold gently into the dry mixture until flour is mixed in. Do not overmix. Spoon into paper cases and sprinkle with extra thyme leaves.

4. Bake for 20 minutes or until golden. Transfer to a wire rack to cool.

**Tips**

- Great to pop in lunch boxes.
- A satisfying mid-morning or afternoon snack at work.
- Freeze in zip lock bags.
- Place defrosted muffins in the oven for 5 minutes to warm through.
- To lower sodium, try no added salt canned varieties.

**Nutritional Info**

Average per serve: Energy 170kJ, Protein 2g, Total Fat 1g, Saturated Fat 0g, Carbohydrate 6g, Fibre 1g, Sodium 185mg.
The information in this booklet has been developed by the Grains & Legumes Nutrition Council™ for general nutrition education. For expert nutrition advice tailored to your needs, contact an Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD). To find an APD in your local area visit ‘Find an APD’ at www.daa.asn.au or call toll free 1800 812 942.

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