



Pulses

Cooking with beans, peas, lentils and chickpeas

(Source: Pulse Canada. To learn more about Pulse Canada please visit their website at www.pulsecanada.com)

Discover a tasty, nutritious and versatile food...pulses. Enjoyed by many cultures around the world for centuries, pulses make wonderful main dishes, soups, salads, appetizers, snacks and even baked goods! Explore new ways to include pulses into your family's diet.

What are pulses?

(<http://www.pulsecanada.com/uploads/4f/3c/4f3c70cc5efe8ead7b1f1c1f052ae932/Cooking-with-Beans-Peas--Lentils-2010.pdf>)

Pulses are also known and often referred to as 'legumes'. Pulse is the term for the edible seeds of legumes (plants with a pod), which includes:

- Dry peas • Dry beans • Lentils • Chickpeas

Pulses do not include fresh green beans or peas.

Pulses are **very high in fibre**. Fibre-rich foods like pulses are often more filling than other foods, helping to keep you full until your next meal. Make sure to drink enough water when adding high fibre foods like pulses to your diet!

Pulses have a **low glycemic index**. Most of the carbohydrates in pulses are fibre and starch that prevent blood sugars from rising quickly after a meal or snack.

Pulses are **gluten free** and can be eaten by people with celiac disease. Pulses are a great alternative to wheat-based products.

A healthy **vegetarian diet** should include a variety of peas, beans, lentils and chickpeas in place of beef, pork, chicken and fish. Eating pulses with a grain, such as wheat, rice, or oats, ensures a high quality protein.

Buying, storing and cooking pulses

You can find most pulses in grocery stores, organic food stores and bulk food stores. Look for pulses in the ethnic, bulk or canned food sections. They are also found in soups or in the baking ingredients aisle. When buying dry pulses, look for:

- Bright coloured seeds
- Uniform size
- Smooth skins without chips or shriveled seed coats

Dry pulses will keep for years if stored in tightly covered containers in a cool, dark, dry place. It is best to use pulses within a year of purchasing. The longer a pulse is stored, the drier it becomes, which increases the cooking time. Canned pulses are very convenient as they are ready to-use. Always rinse and drain canned pulses before using. Canned pulses store well in cool, dry places. They may be stored up to one year.

Soaking tips and methods

- Be sure to check all dry pulses before rinsing or soaking. Remove pulses with shriveled or broken skins or the occasional pebble or twig.
- Dry beans, whole peas and chickpeas must be soaked because their skins do not readily absorb water.
- Dry lentils and split peas do not need to be soaked. Rinse before cooking.

For every 1 cup (250 mL) of pulses, soak with 3 cups (750 mL) water. Whole peas can be soaked for 1-2 hours. Beans and whole chickpeas require longer soaking than whole peas (e.g. min. 4 hours, or preferably soak for 8 hours or overnight).

Cooking tips and methods

- Make sure your saucepan is big enough, as pulses double or triple in size during cooking.
- To prevent foaming, add 1 teaspoon (5 mL) of oil to the cooking water.

- Seasonings like garlic, onion or herbs can be added while cooking pulses.
- Always cook pulses slowly, as cooking them too quickly can break the seed coats.

Note that cooking times may vary based on a number of factors, including age of the pulses, elevation, water hardness, etc. The intent is to cook pulses until they are tender. To achieve optimal cooking, pulses can be tested as they near the prescribed cooking time.

- Tomatoes, vinegar or other acidic ingredients should be avoided until pulses are tender. Acids slow the cooking process.

Soaking method for Instructions for Dry pulses

Long, cold soak or overnight

- Let stand 12 hours or overnight in refrigerator

Quick soak

- Bring pulses and water to boil in a saucepan
- Boil gently for 2 minutes
- Remove from heat, cover, and let stand for 1 hour

Microwave soak

- Combine pulses and water in microwavable dish
- Cover and microwave on high for 10-15 minutes
- Let stand for 1 hour

Always discard the soaking water by putting pulses into a strainer and rinsing them well. This washes away the carbohydrates and sugars that cause gas.

Cooking methods & times for dry pulses

	Beans	Whole Peas	Split Peas	Whole Lentils	Split Lentils	Whole Chickpeas	Split Chickpeas
Rinse	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Soak	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	
Amount of water per 1 cup (250 ml) of dry pulse	2½-3 cups (625 to 750 ml)	2½-3 cups (625 to 750 ml)	2 cups (500 ml)	2½-3 cups (625 to 750 ml)	2 cups (500 ml)	2½-3 cups (625 to 750 ml)	2 cups (500 ml)
Cooking Time	1-1½ hrs	1½-2 hrs	45 min	10-30 min	5-15 min	1½-2 hrs	½-1 hr
Pressure Cook time*	8-12 min	5-7 min	No	No	No	12-15 min	5-7 min
Yield from 1 cup (250 ml) dry pulse	2½ cups	2½ cups	2 cups	2½ cups	2 cups	2½ cups	2 cups

* Pressure cook times are for pulses that have been pre-soaked and are based on the "quick" or "cold water" release method, in which the pressure cooker is placed in cold water

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