

## Fiber All-Star: Lentils

Lentils, a small but nutritionally mighty member of the legume family, are a very good source of fiber, has no fat, high in protein, and inexpensive! The calorie cost of all this nutrition? Just 230 calories for a whole cup of cooked lentils. This tiny nutritional giant fills you up – not out.

### Nutrition Profile and Health Benefits

#### Fiber

- Helps to increase stool bulk and prevent constipation, and prevent digestive disorders like irritable bowel syndrome and diverticulosis.
- Lowers cholesterol.
- Helps manage blood-sugar disorders.

#### Heart Disease

- In a study that examined food intake patterns and risk of death from coronary heart disease from seven countries, researchers found that legumes were associated with an **82%** reduction in risk! (Menotti et al, 1999).

#### Folate and Magnesium

- Folate helps lower levels of homocysteine, an amino acid which damages artery walls and is considered a serious risk factor for heart disease.
- Magnesium helps “relax” the veins and arteries which improves the flow of blood, oxygen, and nutrients throughout the body.



### Tips for Preparing Lentils:

- They do not need to be presoaked.
- Rinse them thoroughly under cool running water.
- **To boil:** 3 cups of liquid for each cup of lentils. Lentils placed in already boiling water will be easier to cook than those that were brought to a boil with the water. When the water boils, turn down the heat to simmer and cover. Green lentils usually take 30 minutes, while red ones require 20 minutes.

### Adding more Legumes to your Diet



- Prepare soups, stews, and casseroles that feature legumes.
- Use pureed beans as the basis for dips and spreads.
- Add chickpeas or black beans to salads. If you typically buy a salad at work and no beans are available, bring your own from home in a small container.
- Snack on a handful of soy nuts rather than on chips or crackers.

Resources: <http://www.whfoods.com/>, <http://www.mayoclinic.com/>

## Skinny Sloppy Joes

Courtesy of <http://peasandthankyou.com>

*Makes filling for at least 4 sandwiches*

### Ingredients

- 1 cup dried lentils, rinsed and drained
- 4 cup vegetable broth or water
- 1 chopped onion
- 2 cloves minced garlic
- 1 tbsp chili powder
- 2 tsp oregano
- 1 14 oz. can tomato sauce
- 1/4 cup (approximately half a can) tomato paste
- 1 tbsp red wine vinegar
- 1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1/4 cup barbecue sauce
- salt and pepper to taste
- pickle slices
- whole wheat hamburger buns, split and toasted



### Instructions

1. Bring broth or water to boil in a medium pot. Add lentils and cook until tender, approximately 30 minutes. Drain and set aside.
2. Meanwhile, add onions in a skillet and sauté lightly over medium heat until start to soften and brown. Add garlic, chili powder and oregano and sauté for an additional minute or two.
3. Add tomato sauce, tomato paste, red wine vinegar, Worcestershire sauce and barbecue sauce. Stir to combine and then add lentils. Mix thoroughly and season to taste.
4. Scoop mixture onto toasted buns and garnish with pickles.