

# guide to cooking

## Beans, Chickpeas, Lentils and Peas

### BUYING AND STORING PULSES

Dry beans, chickpeas, peas and lentils (known as pulses) can be found in most grocery stores, organic food stores and ethnic specialty food stores. When buying dry pulses, look for bright color seeds, uniform size and smooth skins without chips or shriveled seed coats. Although dry pulses will keep years if stored in tightly covered containers in a cool, dark, dry place, it is best to use them within one year of purchase. The longer a pulse is stored, the drier it becomes which increases its cooking time.

Canned pulses are very convenient because they are pre-cooked and ready to use. Always drain and rinse canned beans before use.

- 1 - 540 mL (19 oz) can of pulses = about 500 mL (2 cups) cooked pulses
- 1 - 398 mL (14 oz) can of pulses = about 325 mL (1 ¼ cup) cooked pulses

Cooked pulses store well for 1-3 days in the refrigerator or for several months in the freezer. To freeze, let cooked pulses cool and store in plastic bags or containers in 250 to 500 mL (1 - 2 cup) portion sizes so they are ready to add to your favorite recipes.



### SOAKING PULSES

- Dry beans, whole peas and chickpeas must be soaked before cooking.
- Dry lentils and split peas do NOT require soaking and only need to be rinsed before cooking.
- Before soaking or cooking, remove any shriveled or broken seeds or any foreign matter such as dried soil or pebbles, then place in a sieve and rinse under cold running water. See page 2 for “Soaking Methods” table for more details.
- Always discard the soaking water, place pulses in strainer or sieve and rinse well under cold running water. This will wash away any carbohydrates responsible for flatulence.



### COOKING DRY PULSES

Pulses can be cooked on the stove top, in a slow cooker or pressure cooker, and for certain recipes such as baked beans, in the oven. Regardless of method used, acidic ingredients (such as tomatoes and vinegar) should be added only when the pulses are already tender, as acids and salt slow down the cooking process. However, seasonings such as garlic, onion and herbs may be added to the cooking water right from the beginning.

Some recipes suggest adding baking soda to help soften pulses. This is not recommended as baking soda destroys thiamin, and may make the pulses too soft.

## STOVE TOP COOKING

- Combine pre-soaked pulses with water (5 mL or 1 tsp of oil to prevent foaming) and seasonings in a heavy saucepan.
- Use a large enough saucepan, as pulses double or triple in volume during cooking.
- Bring to a boil, cover tightly, reduce heat and simmer until they are just tender and not mushy.
- Simmer pulses slowly as cooking too fast can break the seed coats.
- Guidelines for cooking times are provided below but these will vary with the type and age of the pulses, as well as with altitude and the hardness of the water.
- Tasting is the best way to check if pulses are done. Cooked pulses are tender, have no “raw” taste, and crush easily in your mouth.
- 250 mL (1 cup) of dry pulses will yield approximately 500 to 750 ml (2 - 3 cups) or 2 - 3 times the original amount when cooked.

## OTHER COOKING METHODS

Pressure cookers shorten cooking time a lot. Slow cookers allow cooking without any attention. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for cooking pulses.

## PULSE PURÉE

Pulse purées are included in cookies, muffins or dips. To make a purée:

- Place cooked pulses in a food processor
- Blend with enough water to make a smooth purée similar in consistency to canned pumpkin

- Water amount can be adjusted for consistency required for the recipe
- Purée can be frozen in plastic bags or containers and kept for up to several months in the freezer.

## GENERAL TIPS FOR EATING MORE PULSES

Some carbohydrates in pulses produce gas and bloating for some people, similar to the effects produced by certain other foods (e.g. cabbage, broccoli, and other vegetables and fruits). Eating pulses often allows your gut to adapt to the higher fibre and carbohydrates, decreasing these effects over time. For those who find that pulses lead to gas and bloating, eat small amounts of pulses, drink lots of water and gradually increase your intake.

**There are also a number of easy ways to significantly reduce the digestive discomfort that can occur from eating pulses:**

- 1 Change the soaking water once or twice during the long cold soak.
- 2 Cook pulses thoroughly as undercooked starch is harder to digest.
- 3 Thoroughly rinse canned or pre-soaked pulses before cooking.
- 4 Do not use the soaking liquid to cook the pulses.
- 5 Take Beano® to help eliminate gas. It is available in health food stores, pharmacies and most grocery stores.

For more information and great recipes, visit [www.pulsecanada.com](http://www.pulsecanada.com)

## SOAKING METHODS

Method	Instructions*
Long Cold Soak or Overnight	Let stand 12 hours or overnight in refrigerator
Quick Soak	Bring pulses and water to boil in a saucepan and boil gently for 2 minutes. Remove from heat, cover, and let stand for 1 hour.
Microwave Soak	Combine pulses and water in a suitable microwave casserole dish, cover and microwave on high for 10-15 minutes. Let stand for 1 hour.

\*For all three soaking methods, add 750 mL (3 cups) of water for every 250 mL (1 cup) of pulses.

## COOKING TIMES

Pulse	Soaking Requirement	Cooking Time
Beans	Yes	45 - 60 minutes
Peas		
Whole	Yes	1 - 1 ½ hours
Split	No	40 - 45 minutes
Lentils		
Whole Green	No	30 - 45 minutes
Split Red	No	10 - 15 minutes
Chickpeas	Yes	1 - 1 ½ hours



CHICKPEAS

BEANS

PEAS

LENTILS

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This material has been made possible through Canada’s Agricultural Policy Framework, a Federal-Provincial Territorial initiative