Lentils

Why lentils are a smart choice

These little but mighty legumes are packed with fiber, protein, iron and antioxidants. Lentils are a fiber powerhouse, so eating them may help you reduce cholesterol and prevent health issues like diabetes, heart disease and osteoporosis. They're rich in magnesium too, which may act as an anti-inflammatory. Plus, lentils pack a big protein punch without the need to add meat to your plate.[1]

Lentils are available year-round but make a great main ingredient for soups during cold winter days. They're very versatile and are terrific for salads and stews, too. Enjoy!

Smart eats for better health

Lentil soup[2]

Ingredients

1 pound lentils

1 bay leaf

3 large carrots, peeled and sliced

2 stalks celery, chopped

1 large onion, chopped

½ teaspoon cumin powder

2 cups crushed tomatoes (fresh or canned)

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

1. Clean the lentils to remove any stones or dirt. Rinse them well in cold water and place in a large pot with enough cold water to cover lentils by six inches. Add the bay leaf and bring to a boil. Keep an eye on the lentils and remove any foam from the water, then lower heat, and boil gently, partially covered, until lentils are just tender, 20-30 minutes.

2. Add carrots, celery, cumin and onion to the lentils. Cook partially covered until the carrots are tender, about 20-30 minutes.

3. Add crushed tomatoes, olive oil, and salt and pepper to taste. Simmer, partially covered, until lentils become very creamy and soft. Stir occasionally and add boiling water if necessary to prevent sticking.

4. Remove bay leaf before serving.

A recipe for better health

Nutritional information — per serving; serving size 1 cup; makes 6 servings
Calories 175.9; Total fat 5.8 g; Carbohydrates 25.2 g; Protein: 8.1 g; Fiber 8.7 g; Magnesium 44.2 mg

Sources
1 Nutrition Facts website: Lentils (accessed August 2017): nutritionfacts.org/topics/lentils
2 Dr. Weil website: Lentil soup (accessed August 2017): drweil.com/diet-nutrition/recipes/lentil-soup