

L is for Legumes!

Presented by the Dietitians at Froedtert & Community Memorial

Legumes are plants that have pods with tidy rows of seeds inside. They include beans, peas, lentils, and peanuts. By far the best plant source of protein, legumes are well stocked with energy giving complex carbohydrates, B vitamins, zinc, potassium, magnesium, calcium, and iron – all in a low cost package. And the protein comes in a package that is low in calories, cholesterol – free, virtually fat-free, and generally high in dietary fiber. Use them up! If you don't have time to cook them, buy them canned, then rinse & drain off the extra salt.

Beans are great for diabetics. Because these nutritious seeds are digested slowly, they cause a gentle rise in blood sugar. As a result, diabetics who eat a substantial amount of beans require less insulin to control their blood sugar.

On average, legumes provide 120 calories, <1 gram of fat, 9 grams protein, and 9 grams fiber. We should incorporate legumes daily in our diets with that kind of profile!

Different legumes provide different amounts of nutrients. Below is the amount of protein, calcium (not considered a high source of calcium) and iron in a ½ cup serving of each legume:

½ cup serving	Protein	Calcium	Iron
Black beans	8 grams	23 milligrams	2 milligrams
Kidney beans	8 grams	25 milligrams	3 milligrams
Garbanzo beans	6 grams	38 milligrams	2 milligrams
Navy beans	8 grams	64 milligrams	2 milligrams
Pinto beans	7 grams	41 milligrams	2 milligrams
Black-eyed beans	7 grams	19 milligrams	1 milligram
Lentils	9 grams	21 milligrams	3 milligrams

So, let's get these beans in our diets! Legumes absorb the flavors of the foods they are cooked with, thus making them a versatile ingredient for casseroles, soups, stews, salads, and even sandwiches. They readily take up the flavors of herbs and spices, garlic and onions, soy sauce, vinegar, and salad dressings. Try to add them to your every day diet by using them in combination with foods you already eat daily. Use cooked (or canned) beans in combination with vegetables such as eggplant, bell peppers, escarole, potatoes, or green beans. Toss them in your salad or on your sandwich!

Easy Hummus

Ingredients:

- 2 cups cooked chickpeas
- 2/3 cup water
- 3 Tablespoons tahini
- 1 large clove garlic
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 Tablespoon olive oil
- 2 Tablespoons lemon juice

Directions: Place all ingredient in blender. Blend until creamy and serve with baked crackers or pita bread or fresh vegetables.